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On the Fossil Man

By

W. Brown

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"2894"

OR,

# THE FOSSIL MAN

(A MID-WINTER NIGHT'S DREAM)

BY  
WALTER BROWNE

H. K. PROWELL'S,  
BOOK EXCHANGE,  
121 Park Row, N. Y. City,  
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# “2894”; OR, THE FOSSIL MAN.

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## CHAPTER I.

### A SCIENTIFIC CRANK!

“MY dear Miss Coddle, pray do not apologize. The train was late, of course it was. They always are. It will be vastly different, thank goodness, a thousand years hence. How is the squire? Out hunting! Cruel sport, Miss Coddle, a thousand years hence—This way? thank you—There will be no such inhuman——” and the rest of Lord Ammonite’s speech was lost in the room reserved for specially honored guests at Chowseltop Hall, Yapham-cum-Meltonby, Yorkshire; in the land of Merry England.

Good old Chowseltop Hall! Now is the time to see it. Standing out boldly and resolutely; with its substantial stone walls defying the blasts of the bleak winter winds; whilst the clinging



snowflakes nestle in every nook and cranny; scarcely more white and spotless than the massive blocks with which this English home is built. A majestic pile of masonry, designed to set at naught the ravages of time; it appears like an emblem of the grand old family it shelters; whose history dates back to the feudal period, and whose stability, given due fecundity, should endure till the millennium.

Warmth and comfort. These are the twin rulers that reigned supreme within those hospitable walls. Elegance, fashion, culture, even knick-knackery, each have a show; but warmth and comfort dominate the whole. In the great central dining-hall the most conspicuous effect is rendered by the large oriel window of richly stained glass, through which the declining rays of a blood-red winter sun infuse over all a rich and mellow tint. Then the heavy plush curtains, the color of a grateful, full-bodied Burgundy with the chill off, and the thick velvet-pile carpet, which feels to weary feet as a feather-bed to a jaded traveller; render recollections of the outer frost and snow a practical impossibility. But what shall we say of the yawning chimney-place with its huge brazier of burning wood; permeating with its glowing glory, not



merely the Englishman's hearth, but his whole heart and his home ?

"Warmth and Comfort." That was the motto of dear old Miss Coddle, the presiding domestic genius of Chowsetop Hall. And she looked warm and comfortable. A sister-in-law of this typical English country gentleman, Miss Margaret Coddle, having drawn a blank in the matrimonial lottery ; became housekeeper to the squire, mother to his motherless daughter, a terror to his servants, and a dearly-loved nuisance to all in that old-fashioned homestead.

When we say that Miss Margaret Coddle had drawn a blank in the Hymeneal lottery, we are not quite correct. The fact is she had never taken a ticket. Once only had a male creature offered himself as a prize, and invited her to dip into the "lucky tub" ; but for reasons hereafter stated she had declined. The hero of this, her only romance, was now upstairs, grumbling and growling at all things that be ; and bewailing the fact that he was not permitted to enjoy his existence in the good time that was coming, a thousand years hence.

Lord Ammonite, D.C.L. ; F.R.S. ; Dr. Sc. ; and a number of other letters too numerous to mention within the limits of this volume ; was a



prophet of science in the strictest sense of the word. Like all prophetic gentlemen, he told of innumerable things that were going to happen in the coming by and bye; and it was impossible to prove that he was wrong. No one ever came back from that bright and brilliant future to contradict him. All his prognostications were to come to pass "one thousand years hence." Prophecy is safe and satisfactory if one goes the whole hog; and looks far enough ahead.

On the evening when we make his lordship's and Miss Molly Coddle's acquaintance, the festive season of Christmas is approaching; and the resources of Chowsetop Hall are about to be taxed to their utmost extent, for the accommodation of a house-party selected by the squire with a better appreciation of variety than of congruity and adaptability. This, however, does not concern the old lady. All she knows is that they must be made warm and comfortable. To-night, in her anxiety to ensure this desideratum, she is in a perfect fever of bustle and excitement. For days past, fires have been lighted in every room in the Hall. Bed-linen has been "aired" and re-aired. Damp beds are as bogies to this fidgety old girl. Her niece, Charlotte (always called "Charlie") Chow-



seltop, declared, the other day, that if Miss Coddle had her way the gardens would never be watered in the summer time, for fear the flowers should suffer from damp beds. Charlie is a perpetual plague to her auntie, although she loves her from the bottom of her fresh young heart.

Leaving dear old Molly for a while, let us follow Charlie Chowsetop on her way to meet the London express train; or rather, like the great St. Bernard dog which chaperones her, let us cross her path and look earnestly into her pretty eyes, that we may know her, and, knowing her, love her—as a natural result.

Tall and exquisitely formed; with a well-shaped head set properly upon her body, by means of a neck whose rounded curves denote delicacy and strength combined. An abundance of glossy dark brown hair, wayward and restless under control, determined to go its own way; but that way always graceful and charming. Eyes of soft blue, always wide open, fearless and curious as those of a questioning child. Thick, close, and elegantly arched eyebrows, almost black by nature, and totally innocent of art. A nose with no aggressive characteristics, modest in its neutrality. The mouth of a Greek goddess, with ripe red lips, slightly parted,



displaying perfect teeth; and a chin set well forward, giving scope for the most bewitching sweep towards her faultless neck. Her walk was dignified, without being stiff; graceful without being studied; and vigorous, though wholly feminine. A charming, happy, healthful English girl. A capital horsewoman and an excellent cook.

Now, with a view to making her an "accomplished young lady," more to please Miss Coddle than her father; who recognized riding and driving as the only arts worth accomplishing; Miss Charlie had gone through a course of study at South Kensington; during which she had made the acquaintance of Salvator Rosa Stubbs, an artist of the school of "Impressionists." At the time when we first meet her, Charlie has become very fond of Mr. Stubbs. Indeed she knows no creature she likes better—of course, excepting "Prince," her big dog.

Salvator Rosa Stubbs, or "Sally" as Miss Chowsetop irreverently called him, was a very commonplace young man. The son of a highly respectable country parson, he had embraced art as a profession, because of the early aptitude he displayed in drawing upon his Dad's slender resources. There could have been no other reason. At drawing from



the figure he was hopelessly incapable. From the vicar he could draw vigorously—often three figures at a time. After his first course of study, finding his pictures strikingly eccentric and original, inasmuch as they were totally unlike anything ever seen in Nature ; it was agreed by his friends that he must be a disciple of the new school of "Impressionists." It therefore became necessary for him to wear long hair, knee-breeches, and a Spanish cloak ; also to carry a wand like the thing fairy queens wave in a pantomime, in place of a walking-stick. Ere long, after making these sweeping changes ; his daubs caught on and sold. The so-called artistic public are easily bluffed, and he promised to become wealthy and the fashion. One difficulty hindered him. He was such a very commonplace young man. Got up for his part, he looked eccentric to the backbone ; but directly you conversed with him, you found him out. He looked "Salvator Rosa" ; but he talked "Stubbs."

With a vigorous spring, which was most unæsthetic, the young artist leapt to the platform of the Yapham-cum-Meltonby railway depot. Charlie was apparently absorbed in patting Prince's head, and totally unconscious of the scene around.



When Stubbs said, "How d'you do?" she appeared quite surprised to see him; when he hoped she was quite well, she said, "Quite well, thank you." Such was the meeting of genius and beauty. But a whole volume of poetry was disclosed in the prolonged pressure of their hands; and the secret thumping of their hearts.

"Mr. Smart, of *The Flypaper*," said Stubbs; introducing a keen-eyed, mercurial young man; who immediately commenced a discourse upon the hospitality of the English race as compared with that of various other nations (too numerous to mention), in which he had travelled; citing personal experiences as examples; artfully contriving to throw in a few fulsome compliments; to touch on contemporary politics, and the ethics of society; which, in common with perpetual pensions and the labor laws, it was his intention entirely to reform by the simple process of putting them all in *The Flypaper*. Needless to say Mr. Smart was a shining light of modern journalism.

How it is that these gentlemen; or whatever they may be; get invited to country house-parties, it is impossible to say; but they get there all the same. Here is Mr. Smart, a Christmas guest at Chowseltop Hall. Nobody wants him. Not



even the squire ; who has some dim recollection of having invited him when he met him somewhere, some night, after some sort of a public dinner to somebody. But Smart is just as much at home as every one wishes he had been. Certainly Miss Charlie didn't want him ; nor did Stubbs ; as they strolled across the park towards the Hall, although he strove to make himself agreeable. He criticised, with the air of a connoisseur, the aspect of the country ; the situation of the house ; the arrangement of the avenues ; and the background of snow-covered hills. He said he would have them altered if the place were his. He would have the trees closer ; the hills slewed around to the left and brought nearer the Hall, so as to break the Nor'-East wind. He didn't say how it was to be done.

On the arrival of this trio, the genial old homestead held its full Christmas complement ; for the Reverend Samuel Lectern had just popped in promiscuously, as often happened, in the nick of dinner-time ; and the squire was already at home with his "fidus Achates" Major McFuss ; having both returned from a hard day's hunting, ready for a hard hour's eating and a hard night's drinking. One word of McFuss, and two of the squire. The Major was a typical Irish soldier. Very ruddy,



rather rough, and a little rude; but honest, upright, and fearless as a lion. Ned Chowseletop, J. P., M. F. H., was a country gentleman of the old school. Jolly, genial, noisy and improvident. An ardent sportsman, with an inborn contempt for science and art. A staunch conservative, and an epicure in wines and cigars.

The dinner gong booms through the Hall. Come! Let us wash our hands, and prepare to meet this variegated household around the hospitable board.

Clatter! clatter! clatter! The music of knives and plates makes merry the great dining-hall, broken at long intervals by a murmur of superfluous apology from Miss Coddle; a grunt of satisfaction from the parson; a whispered compliment and answering coquettish laugh between Stubbs and Miss Charlie; and a disconnected egotistical anecdote, to which nobody pays the slightest attention, from Smart, the society journalist. With the advent of the "Topsy Cake" and sparkling Moselle, the teeth take a rest and the tongues an innings. Having successfully run through several "courses," and arrived at the final "eat," as John, the sporting butler, might have expressed it; these jolly dogs, heartily tired of biting, fell to barking.



"We'd a grand run to-day," bayed the squire.

"Bully!" barked, in basso-profundo, his good friend, the major.

'You should have been with us, Ammonite;" continued Squire Chowseletop. "We flew, positively flew over the ground."

"Flew! Bah!" growled his lordship. "You can't fly. You get astride a horse; flog and spur him to semi-madness; then you boast that you fly."

"The word 'fly' of course, is a figure of speech;" chimed in Mr. Smart. "It is the privilege, indeed the charm of all languages, that certain liberties are taken, in contravention to hard and fast facts. These we term 'hyperbole.' I think I am right?"

The squire nodded wisely. He was mentally reflecting that "Hyperbole" would make a capital name for his yearling by "Hypocrite," out of "Polly."

"Therefore," continued Smart, "although for a man to say he flies, is obviously absurd——"

"Pardon me," broke in Lord Ammonite. "The absurdity is in the fact that man does *not* fly. A few years ago, the notion of talking with friends five hundred miles distant; of hearing the voice of



those gone to their graves, you'd have set down as 'obviously absurd.' But we have the telephone and phonograph; and absurdity appears to exist alone in the thought that for thousands of years these simple scientific desirabilities have never been obtained. In futurity man will no longer be content to hide the natural braggart beneath the paltry shelter of hyperbole. He will solidify figures of speech into facts. If he says 'I fly'; he will fly."

"Perhaps Lord Ammonite will condescend," said Smart, "to give us some definite ideas as to the manner in which ærial navigation is to be performed." And he winked at the company, as if to say—"Now I've got him. You see me draw him out."

"If I possessed such valuable information," quickly responded the scientist, "it would be entirely at your service. Believe me, I should be highly gratified to behold you in the act of flying——"

"Hear! Hear!" bellowed the impressionist. Smart had been extremely attentive to Charlie during dinner.

"But you who profess to hold such advanced views;" continued Ammonite, still addressing his



would-be tormentor, "you writers who claim to walk in the van of the times; you, who should be looking forward and encouraging us, your humble followers, to efforts in aid of progress; inspiring us to inventions; stimulating us to discoveries by which the whole world might advance; you lights of modern journalism who devote your columns to scandal, swept from the scullery of Society, and sensations scraped from the slums; why don't you popularize Science? Why don't you set men thinking instead of sneering? Why don't you hunt up inventions instead of horrors? Why are your public subscriptions invariably in aid of a criminal's defence, and never for an honest man's advancement? To recompense some political sham martyr; whilst genius knows no recognition or reward?—A thousand years hence——"

"Excuse me, Lord Ammonite," interrupted Miss Molly, from the other end of the table; "but you're eating nothing at all." She knew full well that when his lordship got astride of his fad, "Futurity" there was no stopping his mad gallop except by forcibly pulling him down to earth; and this she did in the interest of her other guests, at the risk of being thought rude.

During the silence which followed, Major



McFuss was heard to explain to the vicar that something would never have happened if the general had not come at that moment and turned the right flank; and Charlie distinctly murmured, in the direction of Stubbs: "I'll be in the conservatory."

Ammonite savagely swallowed a spoonful of jelly. The love of his youth had broken in upon his eloquence, just when he felt it welling up within him. "Ah! woman!" mentally apostrophized his lordship,—“you are very fair to see,” (he was looking at Charlie, *not* at Miss Coddle), “and beauty is an incentive to great and sublime mental efforts—in others. When your refining influence has been brought to bear upon your own mental capacity, you will overtop the attainments of men. One thousand years hence——”

“It seems possible that the process of evolution may, at some time, produce a race of men having wings,” hazarded Mr. Smart.

Here was that presumptuous young man advancing a theory; and the scientist dropped down to earth again, intent upon smashing him.

“Evolution be hanged!” cried his lordship.

The squire threw herself back in his chair with



delight; anything approaching a fight was just to his sportsmanlike taste.

"As the mind expands and amplifies, the body deteriorates;" argued Ammonite. "In the dark ages men were physical giants; not effeminate fools." Here the cynic gave a sharp look at Stubbs, who was gazing on Charlie Chowseletop with his best Sunday soulful expression.

"Quite right," observed Smart.

"Nor conceited nonentities," continued his lordship; turning his little sharp eyes on the journalist. "But, as bodily strength became less necessary, in the face of great scientific achievements; our men became less muscular. Mind became progressive, and matter retrogressive. So the physically weak and the mentally strong will be the race of the future. Women, having less animal physique to support than men, will contribute more brain-power. All the indications are in favor of females being the ruling power of the future."

Here Miss Coddle and Charlie began to be really interested.

"Evolution, sir, will never give a man wings," continued the old crank; "but, when science has so changed a man's brain that it puts him on a par with——"



"An old woman," suggested the major.

"Yes, sir," snapped Ammonite, "when it has obliterated all nonsensical notions of chivalry; all barbaric functions for fighting; all inhuman ideas of hunting the weak for the amusement of the strong; then will the mind bring forth finer fruit. Then will the study and application of science achieve what we now deem to be impossibilities. A little more jelly, please."

By this time everybody was bored to death; so Miss Molly made another laudable attempt to change the subject of conversation. As usual, she was unfortunate in her choice.

"Lord Ammonite," said she, "I suppose you have seen Mr. Stubbs' latest picture—The Fantasy in Flesh-color."

"No, Miss Molly; I have not," replied the cynic; adding under his breath, just loud enough for Stubbs to hear:—"and I don't want to, either."

"The Fancy in flesh-color! Is it a prize fight?" questioned the squire.

Salvator Rosa's own particular flesh-color changed to a painful pink beneath this double insult.

"Mr. Stubbs, I believe, as an artist, is generally supposed to be considerably in advance of the



times," remarked Smart. "His work should surely meet with Lord Ammonite's approval."

"Art, sir," returned his lordship, "is the one exception which proves the rule I advance. While science marches forward with vigorous and unerring footsteps; art, as represented by painting and sculpture is steadily retreating. The wonders of our early inventors, Galileo, Franklin, Watts, have formed the nucleus whereon to build, enlarge, and improve. This work of amplification and development still goes on, and will continue until the original structure is lost to sight; but the perfected scientific marvel will remain as a memorial, not to the genius of one; but to the brains of many. Does art adopt this method? No, sir; it sets up as perfection the cracked and dilapidated work of some 'old master,' to clear away whose crudities would be to commit sacrilege. It dissipates the energy of its young blood in affectation of eccentricity, following of foolish fashion, and the inauguration of silly schools. No, Mr. Salvator Rosa Stubbs, when you can take a masterpiece by your great namesake, and build, upon the surface of his paint, a work which shall as far surpass the work of the old master as the marvels of Edison eclipse the victories of Franklin; when you can



obliterate Salvator Rosa with a superior coat of Stubbs; then, and then only will you merit the title of an artist in advance of the times."

Thus addressed, poor Sally Stubbs looked far from mild and æsthetic. He was much tempted to put a coat of black and blue, over the faded flesh-color of the amiable Ammonite's confounded cheek.

Smart set up another bogie for the Quixotic old bore to tilt against.

"Really, with such extraordinary views, I wonder your lordship does not write a book," he said.

"What would be the use?" replied Ammonite. "Nobody would read it."

A murmur of approval passed around the table. Every one seemed entirely to agree with the noble lord upon this subject.

"Except savants and scientists," continued the old wind-bag.

"With such indications as we possess, it would be possible to write a history of the future, quite as authentic and reliable as that record of obscure ages which is culled mainly from groundless and grossly exaggerated traditions. Heathen Mythology should give place to Prospective Philosophy. Ancient History make room for Modern Prob-



abilities. Latin and Greek should be superseded by a system of Mind-reading. School-children should not seek to emulate heroes of olden times, but should strive to idealize the coming man. Then would 'The Utopian Days' depose 'The Arabian Nights;' and Science and Electricity, the true genii of the future, would become as dear to the hearts of youth as 'The Old Man of the Sea' or 'The Slave of Aladdin's Lamp.' "

At this point, Miss Coddle, with true womanly tact, effectually silenced the old bore by requesting the vicar to say grace. Then—exit the ladies. The parson took this opportunity to slip away and join them in the drawing-room. Stubbs shortly afterwards joined one of them in the conservatory.

"Play billiards?" asked the major.

"A little," said Smart.

"Come along then," said McFuss.

"Right you are," replied the journalist.

Thus the party was dispersed; and the squire and his noble guest sat sipping port and smoking in silence and alone.

Not quite alone. There came and sat on the left of the squire, ready to take part in the subsequent proceedings, a grim, grizzly horror, which that improvident gentleman had admitted to his



house some time ago ; in the days of his youthful folly ; and which had come to stay. A perpetual guest, who must be treated courteously, although constrained to keep close quarters in a cupboard. In stalked the Family Skeleton.



## CHAPTER II.

### THE FAMILY SKELETON.

LORD AMMONITE and Ned Chowsetop, although totally at variance as to habits and temperaments, had been close friends; nay, almost companions from the days of their boyhood. It was during their "chumming" days at Oxford that the squire set up the first bones of his skeleton. Metaphorically, he got about as far as the shins. Later the backbone and ribs were raked off "the turf." A pack of hounds supplied the arms, and the Stock Exchange the skull. He now possessed a perfect specimen of that most unpleasant haunting-machine, too widely known by the name of "Debt." Thus it was that years ago Ammonite had become, in a manner, Chowsetop's banker. The squire drew upon his old friend in his careless, happy-go-lucky manner, until his steadily increasing debit balance had attained most serious proportions. Of course Lord Ammonite, who was not quite a



fool, and was fond of looking into futurity; had got ample security for his succession of loans. These ranged from peg-tops and clasp-knives, to I.O.U.'s and mortgages. The latter were negotiable; but still, for friendship's sake, they had remained in his safe, and would probably do so until both were dead. "Then they might bring trouble to Ned's daughter," reflected Lord Ammonite. "Some scheme must be devised," he continued, "by which I may gain some compensation, and neither Ned nor his girl maybe the loser."

"Well," said his lordship, after one of those uncomfortable spells of chilly silence which always fall on a company when they feel that the cupboard door is open and the skeleton at large; "well, Ned, how are things going now, with you?"

"Badly," said the squire. "Have another glass of port."

Ammonite had one. He felt that he might want some artificial courage to carry out the scheme of adjustment which he had in his head.

The squire took two or three glasses in rapid succession; then gathered himself together and sat down to ride straight to a finish, regardless of obstacles.

"If you knew how I've curtailed my expenses



during the last year, old fellow," he began, "you would be surprised."

"Yes, Ned, I should," laconically replied Lord Ammonite. "Then I suppose you are anxious to take up some of your little obligations," sneered the cynic.

"I am. I am most anxious," said the squire. "There is two years' interest due for that loan on the Home Farm. I should like to clear that off. I'm afraid I cannot repay any capital; but, I'll tell you—if you will advance me a thousand on the reversion of old Lectern's living (it's my gift, and worth all that; or I'm no judge of incipient apoplexy), then I can pay you something on account of the Home Farm interest. A happy thought, isn't it? I'll tell my lawyer to draught out the papers to-morrow. Shall I?"

"No, Ned; I don't like the idea of reversions," began Ammonite.

"Don't you?" said Chowseltop. "Pshaw! man, why, with your fad for speculating on the future——"

"It is because I do look to the future that I feel bound to tell you, Ned, that some more solid arrangement must be made between us," said his lordship; looking intently at the carpet, and nerv-



ously tracing the pattern with the toe of his boot. "It would be neither nice nor satisfactory to stave off affairs by a mere speculation on the life of a man who may last longer than either of us. So long as we live, all will be well; but, after that, who is to have the reversion of our living; of your debts? How will those who follow me treat those who follow you?"

The squire thought of his happy, lighted-hearted daughter Charlie; sole heiress to his accumulated debts and difficulties; and a lump came into his throat. He washed it away with another glass of port.

"There appears to me," continued Ammonite, "to be only one way to avert a calamity. Our families must be united."

"United!" cried the squire, looking curiously at Ammonite. "But how? By marriage?"

"Hem! Yes. That might be a means;" murmured his lordship; and then he fell to work again upon the carpet with his other foot.

"What is she like?" asked Chowseltop, laughing merrily. "I might sacrifice myself, if she's not particularly ugly."

"You misunderstand. The sacrifice has usually been on my side, Ned Chowseltop," said Am-



monite seriously. "I should not propose to alter the established order of things——"

"What! *You* marry?" cried the squire.

His lordship was silent. The pattern of the carpet was a complicated one and seemed to require his whole attention to unravel its intricacies.

Chowseltop looked puzzled for a time. Suddenly it recurred to him that there had been something of a tender nature existing between the scientist and his sister-in-law, Miss Molly Coddle; and he instantly accepted this as the solution to Ammonite's scheme of amalgamating interests by marriage.

"I see it, old fellow. A capital idea!" he cried.

"I'm glad you look upon the notion with approval;" said his lordship. "I was afraid you might have had some sentimental scruples." The fact that Ammonite was old enough to be, indeed was older than Miss Charlie Chowseltop's father, had caused his nervousness in broaching the subject; and his close attention to the flowered pattern in the carpet.

"Sentimental scruples! Bosh!" ejaculated the squire. The idea of his breaking his heart over parting with Miss Molly set him chuckling.

"Take her, my boy, take her—bless you, my



children," said he with mock gravity. Then he burst into boisterous laughter.

Clearly there was a misunderstanding. But neither was aware of it.

From the days of his studious youth it had been a pet theory of the scientist that woman, being physically weaker than man, should be mentally the stronger. The lamentable fact that this was not so he attributed to lack of proper mind development. This naturally bred in him a strong desire to experimentalize upon his own account; and, he argued, "Who so fit a subject as a wife?" So he had cast about him for a maid of simple, unsophisticated nature and pleasing person; whose mind he might mould, whose thoughts control, and whose intellect he could expand, until she should become his ideal woman.

He tried several young ladies, and, in making his proposals, freely told them of all these advantages which he intended to bestow upon them; but (such is the ingratitude of woman) they one and all declined. Miss Margaret Coddle had been the last upon the list. In a laudable desire to win the lady's love for himself alone; and, warned by former experiences; he had generously hid from her the many favors of the mind-moulding type, which



he intended to confer upon her after marriage. Ammonite had intended to wed poor Molly as a common lord, and then to dazzle her with the wonders of his laboratory. All went well. They were engaged; the wedding-day was fixed. But, alas! his lordship could not refrain from hazarding some few simple experiments. For instance, when they sat alone upon some rustic seat, in the love-breathing moonlight, he would pour into her eager ear a flood of information respecting Darwin's theory of evolution, as viewed in juxtaposition with the recent revelations of progressive science. Thus were the happy hours of courtship spent. But unfortunately a crowd of his lordship's former flames; with that eagerness to interfere which characterizes youthful womanhood; swooped down upon poor Molly, and with ominous hints as to "mind-moulding" and other horrible operations to which she would be treated, they scared that poor simple girl into tearfully begging Ammonite to release her from her promise, and let her love him all her life as a very dear friend. The scientist was discouraged. For years he had abandoned his pet project; but Charlie Chowseletop's beauty had somehow awakened his desire for matrimony and mind-moulding.



"She's a fine-looking creature," mused the old man, half aloud.

"Very," said Chowseltop, heartily. He did not wish to discourage his friend by speaking his true feelings respecting Miss Coddle's appearance. Then he cogitated thus—"If love is blind, it may be quite possible that he does not think Molly at all plain."

"But I don't agree with her manner of dressing," continued the cynic, becoming captious in the same degree as he gained confidence.

"Don't you?" replied the squire. "That's a pity." He had just arrived at the period when conversation became an effort, and dozing unavoidable. A hard day's riding, a big dinner, a bottle of port, and an easy mind all demanded sleep.

"No, sir. When she becomes Lady Ammonite she shall join the Rational Dress Association. She shall wear the divided skirt."

The idea of Molly Coddle in pantaloons was enough to momentarily waken the squire from his slumbers. He chuckled softly and said, "If you mean that she'll wear the breeches, I fancy you're right."

"Look here, Ned," said his lordship, rising and



laying a hand upon his friend's shoulder, "I want you to do me a favor in this matter."

"All right, old chap," said Chowseltop; and he sat up, shook himself and looked around for help, as it were. He found it in the port wine decanter; and helped himself. "What is it?"

"I want you to put the question to her."

"With pleasure, old man. What question?" drivelled the worn-out sportsman. "Have a glass of port."

"No, Ned," said Ammonite, literally shaking the squire into attention. "Look here, I'm a little bit afraid. As a matter of fact, I've suffered so many refusals that I ought to be used to it; but I'd rather not add to the number. So I want you to make my proposal at the first opportunity, and tell me the result. If favorable, I'll at once speak to her myself. If not, you will thus spare her the unpleasantness and me the humiliation. Will you do this?"

"My boy," heartily replied the Squire; "I'll do it now. I'm just in the humor for any little cupid-like commissions," and he rose rather unsteadily from his chair.

"No, Ned, not now," said Ammonite, detaining



him. In his present mood he felt certain his friend would prove a failure as Love's ambassador.

The entrance of Smart and McFuss cut short the confabulation.

Now it was the habit of the pedantic old nobleman to set down in a diary the uneventful episodes and incidents of his particularly colorless life; but, having inadvertently left his manuscript at his country seat two days before, he had purchased a new book in London yesterday and made but one short entry at the hotel last night. When he retired to his room at Chowseptop Hall, he felt most prolific, and sitting by the fire he began to write.

Here we are in danger of encroaching upon private property, prying into personal secrets; so we will leave his lordship and take a last peep at the home-party in the drawing-room. Too late. Only the Squire remains and he is fast asleep, fancying himself behind an imaginary pack of hounds in full cry. Miss Coddle, having seen the rest of her guests comfortably disposed; with a vigorous shake, checks his chase.

"Come, Ned, to bed," says she.

But Chowseptop sees an opportunity to lend a helping hand to his friend's supposed matrimonial projects, so replies: "Sit down a bit, Molly, I've



got great news for you. How would you like to have a husband, Moll?"

Miss Coddle sat down with a little scream, then looked at him intently. "Has he been drinking, or has he forgotten that the deceased wife's sister bill is not yet passed?" she thought.

Chowseltop leaned back in his chair, chuckled, and favored her with a particularly knowing, long-drawn-out wink. "I've got to make a proposal for your hand and heart, and anything that is his—hers—yours, I mean," he said.

"How foolish! Why, brother-in-law, you know it's impossible," said the lady rising. "Come, you're tired," she said. "You're tipsy," was what she thought.

"Nothing of the kind. My friend Lord Ammonite——"

"Yes," said Molly. She suddenly saw matters in a different light, and sat down again. This proposal might be worth listening to.

"Ammonite is an ardent, hot-blooded, passionate young dog," pursued the squire; "and he says he is consuming his heart, wearing his shadow to bare skin and bone, for love of you. Do you follow me?"

Miss Coddle could not quite follow the squire's



words, but she caught the spirit of them, and sank back with a sweet little maidenly sigh. She felt she had been cruel to her scientific swain in years gone by; and burying her head in her hands, she actually succeeded in squeezing something very like one tear from her left eye.

"Is the poor dear man very bad—very unhappy?" she asked, with a laudable endeavor to fill up the gaps with stifled sobs. But she was evidently out of practice, and produced only superficial sniffs.

"Unhappy! rather;" roared the squire. "He threatens to blow his brains out; only he's got such a lot of 'em, he's afraid he could never do it at one shot."

"Ha! That reminds me," said Molly, looking up through her tear: "Is he still as mad after mind-moulding as ever?"

"Yes, madder," said Ned; not quite catching her meaning; but impressed with the idea that insanity in any form would be recognized as a proof of undying affection.

"Then it's all off," said the maiden; and once more she rose to take her leave.

"Hold on," cried the squire; as he realized the mistake that he'd made. "Hold on, Molly; you



don't understand. He's on another fox now. It is his own mind he wants moulded. He wants you to do it."

"And he told you to tell me this?" asked Miss Molly.

We regret to be compelled to chronicle the fact that the wicked squire at this point was guilty of a deliberate lie. We make no excuses for him. True, he believed himself to be obliging a friend. Moreover he was tired; and perhaps not quite responsible for his actions. These reasons, possibly added to the trifling fact that he imagined this marriage would restore to him his lost fortune and estates, may be brought forward by him as extenuating circumstances when he is called upon to answer for his sin. But we wish it to be understood that we in no way endorse his conduct. We only record the unhappy fact. He did it on his own responsibility; and he must stand by it.

A little thing like this annoys us. We will follow the painful scene no longer. Suffice it to say that the squire got his sister-in-law's assurance that if Ammonite approached her in lover-like manner, his attentions should not go unrewarded.



## CHAPTER III.

CHRISTMAS EVE, A. D., 1894.

THE next morning was Christmas Eve. (Pardon the apparent absurdity of the remark; but it is common usage in England to call the whole of the day preceding the great Christian Festival "Christmas Eve.") Miss Coddle, after taking special pains with her toilet, tripped daintily down the stairway, and made for the great mirror in the dining hall to survey her full length of five feet nothing; and make sure that she looked her sweetest and her best. Then she rearranged the flowers on the table, putting the choicest bunch before his lordship's plate; and tested the spring-cushioned chairs, carefully ascertaining which was the softest and most comfortable; and removed this to the right of the squire, where her fancied future lord and master would sit.

Stubbs was the next to put in an appearance. Not a very effective appearance either. His lengthy



locks, being commonplace like himself, refused to curl without artificial incentive; and the insufficient heat afforded by his bedroom candle had caused the curling process by means of lukewarm tongs to prove a failure. He carried the necessary implements in his coat pocket, and looked wistfully at the blazing fire, then dejectedly at the mirror; but circumstances were against him, for close upon his heels came Mr. Smart; and he dared not run the risk of seeing his ringlets paragraphed in *The Flypaper*. As it was, Smart asked him if he had a headache, and said he judged he had by the tired look about his hair.

Next came Miss Charlie; and she laughed outright as she shook hands with Sally Stubbs: but he was thankful she whispered, "Why don't you put it up in paper?" in a tone that no one else could hear.

The squire and Major McFuss shortly afterwards came in together; and Ammonite arrived in time to join them in a brandy and soda.

Breakfast was chiefly remarkable that morning by reason of the many mysterious nods and reassuring winks bestowed upon his lordship by his host; and the assiduous attention paid to his wants by the good old lady who acted as hostess. After



breakfast it was ordained by Charlie that the entire party should go skating on the lake. Such as pleaded that they had no skates, for none would own they could not skate, were soon provided with a pair; in some cases, much to their disgust. It was with many misgivings that Lord Ammonite consented to go down to the lake; but he secretly determined to find some excuse to shirk the skating. The implements they brought him (old-fashioned and rusty, with huge, sharp-pointed steels turned up at the toe), would probably not fit him. Or he might surreptitiously drop them on the road.

He was cogitating thus when Ned Chowseltop took him aside and made the silly old man's heart thump as he whispered—"It's all right, my boy; I tackled her last night. She will consent if you ask her. Strike while the iron's hot. This morning while you are skating together."

"It is clear," thought his lordship, "such an opportunity should not be missed. There is no help for it. I must skate; or at least try to do so." So he grabbed his skates, feeling like a knight of old, prepared for deeds of daring, or for death.

When the lake was in sight; the butler's two boys having swept a clean patch and brought down a couple of chairs; everybody gave a cry of happy an-



icipation. Goodness! what a rush there was to adjust Miss Charlie's skates, as she took possession of one chair, and Miss Coddle sat in the other. Smart seized her left foot, and Stubbs seized her right. Ammonite got up in time to hold the back of her chair, much to Miss Molly's annoyance. But the gallant major went on his knees before Molly, and remarked upon the smallness of her foot loud enough for Ammonite to hear; and that at least was some satisfaction.

Off darted Charlie, with rapid, easy flight, as a swallow in summer might skim the surface of the lake.

"Hi! Hi! The ice isn't too thick over there, Miss," cried one of the servants.

"Charlie, come back!" roared the squire.

"Come back!" echoed Ammonite.

The young men who had scrambled into their skates said nothing, but raced off, each anxious to rescue the lady, oblivious of the fact that their extra weight would only increase her danger. But before they could reach her she had turned rapidly around and glided gracefully off in another direction. They still continued their race, however, and soon each held one of her dainty little hands.

It now transpired that Ammonite had forgotten



how to skate, and he was constrained to accept the proffered assistance of Miss Coddle. Poor old lady! How often during those happy moments did she misconstrue the nervous grip he gave her hand; the many little clutches he made at her waist; not to mention the one full-blown embrace he bestowed upon her. She put them down to love. She was totally mistaken.

There is perhaps no figure less calculated to inspire one with the tender passion than that of a short fat gentleman of fifty, wrestling with a pair of skates for the first time in his life; and it spoke volumes for the blind devotion of Miss Molly Coddle, who had been a first class ice-woman in her youth, that Ammonite's ungraceful exhibition did not entirely obliterate his image from her loving heart. But, though her staunch heart withstood the shock, her delicate wrists were totally inadequate to sustain the strain of this floundering two hundred and fifty pounder. After a time, she was compelled to relinquish her post and leave him to his own resources.

For a minute he stood some distance from the shore, looking helplessly around. Then he sat down. His intention was to gain the side upon his hands and knees; but, just at this moment,



Miss Charlie hove in view at the other end of the pond, and alone. A chance his lordship had been longing for. He would prevail upon her to lend him a hand ; and take the opportunity to offer her his own, together with his hand and fortune.

With a supreme effort he arose, struck out boldly, and made quite half a dozen dashing strides ; but alas ! his course lay across that strip of ice which should have been labelled, "Dangerous" ; and just at the critical moment he slipped. His feet flew up ; his back flopped down ; a crackling like a distant volley of musketry ran along the surface of the pond ; a big yell ; a little splash ; and the treacherous ice closed tranquilly over the vanished form of the unfortunate Ammonite.

Miss Coddle had barely time to scream and go into a fit of hysterics, when her hero's head appeared above the surface, blowing like a porpoise, and crying lustily for help.

A scene of indescribable confusion ensued, during which everybody appeared to forget that in no part was the water in the lake more than two feet deep. It was the squire who first recovered his senses, and much scandalized the rest by burst-



ing into a boisterous fit of laughter: Miss Coddle stopped her hysterical yelling for a moment, and told him he ought to be ashamed of himself. Little heeding her, so soon as he was able to articulate, Chowseltop shouted to his friend:—

"I say, old boy, when you've washed your head all you want, let down your legs, and walk out to this bank."

At this moment his poor half-drowned lordship found his feet; and standing there in the water up to his middle, looking a dripping picture of dismay and disgust, he picked his silk hat off the surface of the water, and mechanically placed it on his head.

Now every one shrieked with laughter. Even Molly's screams gave place to uncontrollable giggling. Ammonite looked hurt; took out his saturated pocket-handkerchief and angrily blew his nose. This set them off again. They formed a circle around him, at a safe distance, and stood and laughed their loudest.

At length his pent-up indignation found vent in words.

"When you've finished," he said, "perhaps you'll kindly show me the way out of this."

"You must break the ice," roared the squire.



"I have, sir," replied Lord Ammonite.

"Break a passage" suggested Smart.

This was indeed the only way out of it. So the poor old man set to work hammering the surface and hobbling along the muddy bed in his skates until he reached the bank.

Of course this incident broke up the skating party; and all followed his dripping lordship to the Hall, trying to look sorry, but too amused to succeed; all but Molly Coddle, who felt sure that the worst was yet to come. She knew he would catch his death of cold, and die perchance upon the eve of their happy wedding day.

Oh, the torture this good old lady made him endure on his arrival at the house! He was given a hot bath, as if he hadn't had enough of water for one day; scrubbed with rough towels by old John and his sons, rolled up in blankets and rugs and put to bed. Fed upon steaming hot broths and beef-tea. Forbidden to come down to lunch or dinner, and left fuming at the thought of Miss Charlie being at the mercy of those two attractive but idiotic young noodles, Salvator Rosa Stubbs, and Socrates Smart.

After dinner on Christmas Eve, the Yule-log was placed on the fire; and that happy household



in common with all which own an Englishman as head, prepared for a gala night of revelry and mirth. A very short time sufficed for the great dining-table to be cleared away, and then the games began. To these the tenants came, and the upper servants were all welcomed. The gamekeepers, the lodgekeeper, and such as had them, brought their families. Of course the vicar came, and the parish clerk. Indeed a motley crew were gathered in Chowseltop Hall; each and every one bent on one object only,—to thoroughly enjoy themselves. Old men left their worries. Old women forget their ailments. Everybody, even the head-groom and the parson, shut up shop. All became children again; and all were intensely happy.

"Musical chairs" was the first game indulged in; and the old Hall resounded with hilarity as one after another of the players were shut out. The fun was at its height. Miss Coddle and the parson were left in for the final; and, just at the crisis, the Reverend Samuel adroitly slipped into the chair. Molly, with excess of excitement, flopped down on his lap, when the door opened and an apparition met her gaze.

Lord Ammonite, still swathed about with blankets and rugs, a poke night-cap on his head,



and a candle in his hand, stood staring at her "like an accusing spirit," as she afterwards said. Molly slipped off the vicar's plump knees, right on to the floor, and hysterically exclaimed: "Oh! I'm a miserable woman! I know it will be broken off now."

Everybody wondered what was broken off. The squire asked if it hurt her much; and the game-keeper's wife offered to lend her her own; only she feared it would not be large enough.

In the midst of the excitement Lord Ammonite sternly demanded to know what had become of his clothes.

Miss Coddle with an effort pulled herself together, and explained that they were drying in the kitchen, and as yet were quite unfit to wear. Then it transpired that his lordship had not got a change with him. Still he was determined not to lie in bed with so much noise down there. What was to be done? The squire's suits were not nearly large enough. Eventually a huge easy-chair was wheeled to the chimney corner, and there, just as he was, with some additional cushions and rugs, the old boy was ensconced as a sort of specially honored spectator. Miss Molly told herself off as an amateur "Hébé" to ply him with hot grog.



The old man quaffed as quickly as she mixed; and she, good soul, knowing the efficacy of hot spirits for driving out cold, mixed as fast as he quaffed.

Then a dance was proposed. No sooner said than done. The whole crowd were whirling around with all sorts of steps of their own invention. In time or out of it. It didn't matter. They were all in a heaven of happiness. Ammonite could stand, or rather sit it, no longer. Jumping to his feet, he caught hold of Molly, and commenced careering around. The room full of people stopped and screamed with delight, as his wrappings and rollings threatened one by one to depart from his person. Molly pushed him by main force into a chair; and, procuring a clothes-line, bound his coverings so securely that all fear of accident was at an end; and the young ladies unburied their sweet blushing faces. Lord Ammonite had a rare good old time of it for the rest of the evening.

At length midnight tolled; and the "Loving Cup" went round. A monster silver chalice, as old as the Hall itself; filled with fascinating punch, from which squire, tenant, and servant, old and young, rich and poor, all drank alike. An un-



fortunate custom for Lord Ammonite, as the decoction of rum, after numberless whisky toddies had a confusing effect. Eventually the squire's health was drunk with cheers, three times three, and the time-honored chorus of "He's a jolly good fellow;" then, after a "nightcap" of a spirituous and liquidy nature, the guests noisily departed.

Christmas Eve, soon after midnight; as everybody knows; is just the period when spectres stroll about old family mansions in a free-and-easy manner; and apparitions issue forth, making themselves perfectly at home. This is the hour when ghosts and ghouls stand in the moonlight and wave their grizzly arms. Or, if there is no moonlight available, they will sit in the glow of a fire and sigh, generally three times, then vanish into smoke. On this particular night clanking chains have a habit of dragging themselves up and downstairs, and unearthly yells give themselves a holiday outing.

As Miss Charlie Chowseltop sat before her mirror, placidly letting down her long back hair, it was none of these horrible sounds which caused her to jump up and strain her sense of hearing to the full. What was it she heard, breaking the death-like stillness of the corridor? A hiccough? Yes,



an unmistakable hiccough. Her blood did not freeze in her veins. Her hair did not stand on end. If it had, it would have touched the ceiling. No. Merely for a moment did her mind revert to ghosts. But, she instantly reflected, a ghost yells, moans, sighs, or even laughs. It hiccoughs never. The mysterious sound came again. This time just outside her door. Hastily donning her dainty peignoir, she determined to solve the mystery; and, throwing open the portal, she stepped into the dimly-lighted landing. There she saw a grotesque figure, wrapped and bound, as it were, in shroud or cerements, advancing unsteadily towards her.

She did not scream or faint. She only began to giggle. On came the uncanny thing; and, flopping down on its knees before her, it tried to seize her hand. As she stepped back, however, his lordship came very near falling on his face.

Recovering his devotional attitude, interspersed with hiccoughs, he began:—"Miss Chowseltop—Charlie, I love you."

The maiden came very near screaming at this; but it was with laughter. She restrained herself, however, and said, with disgust: "Lord Ammonite, for shame! Go to your room."



"Not until I have offered you my hand and heart," replied the amorous swain.

"Your heart!" laughed Charlie, secretly enjoying the absurd situation; "I don't believe you have one,—an old fossil like you."

For the slang expression Stubbs was probably responsible.

"You do not love me, then!" wailed Ammonite.

"Not a bit," said Charlie.

"But in time you might. People learn in time to love even fossils. It is an acquired taste, no doubt. So am I."

Charlie was very angry; but she laughed outright at the idea of her acquiring a taste for the funny figure at her feet.

"You may change, Miss Charlie," urged Ammonite. "That heart which is as ice to me may thaw. All things change, even this great world itself. For instance, we had the glacial period, followed by that of tropical fecundity."

"For you my heart is still in the glacial period," replied the damsel.

"One thousand years hence——" began the luckless lord.

"One thousand years hence I may have changed enough to love even you," laughed Charlie.



"It's rather a long time to wait;" ruefully remarked Lord Ammonite, as he struggled to his feet. "But who knows? Many hold a theory that our component parts reunite in futurity and we live again."

"Very well! When that time comes, I am yours," said Miss Chowseltop, with mock solemnity; and adding "Good-night, my faithful old fossil," she slipped into her room, locked the door, and, midst her merriment thought, "Poor silly old man! He has dipped too deeply in the loving cup."

Lord Ammonite stood still. That is as still as possible; with that unpleasant feeling which one has if conscious of having made a mess of things. A vivid flash of lightning and a roar of thunder awoke him from his reverie, and he toddled to his room. Mechanically he took out his diary and strove to write; but his thoughts were wandering, and his fingers ill to guide. He wrote some few entries, then put it away. What were the commonplace events of life to him? His lady loved him not; and henceforth all was nothingness.

He beat his head and groaned aloud. Not that it hurt him. He took care not to beat it hard enough. He recalled his lost one's words. "One thousand years hence I may have changed enough



to love even you." "Oh! that I could step into futurity!" he cried. "That glorious time when all my dreams will be fulfilled! Oh! that I might meet my love in that Utopian land! And may it not be so? Science tells us that our elementary gases, liberated by slow decay or the swifter process of cremation; and filtered for generations through vegetable matter, may again become animals in likeness to ourselves. An old fossil! She called me an old fossil!—Great heavens! What a thunder peal was there! Some mighty electric power is at work to-night. Such a force as fashions worlds, upheaves mountains, and in moments does the work of a million years. How cold it is! I'll go to rest. Ha! The room is swaying. The bed swings to and fro. It eludes my touch. The earth is upheaving. The walls are shaking, falling, crumbling away. A roar as of a thousand cannon. I see stars. The roof has surely fallen in. I am cold, lifeless, dead. My brain is paralyzed. My limbs are turned to stone. I am an old fossil. Yes, I am a Fossil Man."



## CHAPTER IV.

UTOPIA. A. D. 2894.

(Extract from the columns of *The Fleabiter*,  
Evening Newspaper, 19 P. M., April 1st, 2894.)

## EXTRAORDINARY DISCOVERY!

THE DEAD SPEAK!!

THE VOICE OF PRE-EARTHQUAKIAN MAN!!!

TRIUMPH CROWNS PROFESSOR MARGARET COD-  
DLE'S ARDENT RESEARCHES!!!!FULL TEXT OF THE ANTIQUITY WITH COPIOUS  
EXPLANATIONS!!!!!!

An interesting relic of the dark ages has come to light in that obscure and obsolete island where the once mighty British nation proudly held its sway. The curio consists of a few fragments of well preserved manuscript writing, unfortunately of no historical value; but which serve to illustrate the primitive and peculiar thoughts and habits of our ancestors one thousand years ago; when



science was in its dawn of efficacy, and its zenith of conceit.

Ever to the front in supplying our multitudinous readers throughout the world with every item of interest immediately it occurs, if not before ; our special correspondent left by special pneumatic tube for Yapham, Yorkshire, with instructions to telephone our automatic phonotypographer (which prints directly from the voice), the full text of this interesting curiosity. For the lack of illustration we are not responsible. The plan of presenting sketches made on the spot, of things they have never seen, by artists who have never been there, has long been discontinued. It was under consideration whether views of that celebrated antiquarian, Professor Margaret Coddle, fishing the precious document out of a dust heap ; with the ruins of Yapham Hall in the distance and a smile of truculent triumph floating around her face, might not have been attractive ; but the lady, with her well-known modesty, objected to be taken anyway but back view ; and the project was abandoned. It is our intention in this present issue very briefly to comment upon this marvellous message from the by-gone past. It will be evident to all that the writer must have been a man of con-



siderable attainments ; and in many cases his work displays a knowledge and understanding far in advance of the unenlightened age in which he lived. Indeed he now and then foreshadows the gigantic strides which science and civilization have made during the one thousand years which have elapsed since he penned his diary. Here following is the text of this extraordinary manuscript given verbatim ; merely recognizing such deficiencies as Father Time, in his wisdom, has chosen to create in the obliteration of certain portions, doubtless effected by his trusty scavengers "mildew" and "dry rot." Dry rot, in particular is responsible for much that is omitted.

Our correspondent telephones—"The remarkable discovery which you have commissioned me to examine, was dug from the ruins of what has evidently been a dwelling house of some ancient British family of considerable pretensions. In form the remnant resembles a book. The writing is of the more ancient type known as handwriting ; which clearly fixes the date before the universal use of the old type-writer, which swept away the more clumsy pen and ink about the beginning of the twentieth century, and eventually gave place to the phonotype (A. D. 2000)."



THE FIRST ENTRY IS DATED—

*"London. December 22d."*

(The London here mentioned was probably the ancient British settlement on the banks of the River Thames; said to have been a place of considerable pretensions before the universal earthquake.)

*"Arrived at King's Cross, 5:30. Train late."*

(Wheeled carriages dragged along the earth by means of the fumes of boiling water were called "trains." To be "late" appears to have been part of the regular system; as all extant records of their doings chronicle this fact.)

*"Foggy."*

(This ambiguous expression probably refers to a peculiar and unique state of the atmosphere, said to have been enjoyed by the "cock-knees," or dwellers by the Thames. The word is now obsolete.)

*"Drove to Metropole. Driver grumbled about his fare. Swore dreadfully."*

(It must be remembered that the drivers of those days were not ladies.)

*"Splashed with mud and slush. Why do not they cart the snow away, and utilize it somehow?"*

(Here the writer foreshadows our time, when



congealed rain is compressed and done up in tins for the summer recreation of school-boys. "Pratt's Potted Snow-balls are the best." *Advt.*)

*"After dinner, went to the Alhambra."*

(A barbaric temple of worship.)

*"Saw two fine ballets."*

(A most imposing ceremony, said by some ancient writer to have been more attractive than the ritual of the Church.)

*"Much struck by the leading coryphée."*

(These were a totally distinct class from the saints of old.)

*"Heard 'Annie Rooney' and 'Ta-rara-boom-de-ay.'"*

(Probably persons of foreign extraction. Popular teachers.)

*"Supper at Scott's."*

After this the writing becomes illegible. The worthy Mr. Lett probably supped with a friend; and, after the manner of the ancient Britons, spent the night in conviviality.

The next entry is dated "*Chowsetop Hall. December 23d.*"

*"Came down by parliamentary train."*

(This stamps our scribe as a man of means and a member of the legislature.)



*"Late of course. Stopped at every station. Bitterly cold and no footwarmers. In futurity surely some scheme will be devised for keeping the extremities aglow."*

(Another idea in advance of the diary-maker's time.—"Cooper's Calorific Socks and Gloves are the cheapest in the market." *Advt.*)

*"On arrival, all out except old Molly. Kind to a fault, as usual. Blazing fire in room."*

(This must be taken as no accidental conflagration, for these primitive people actually burnt things for the purpose of warming themselves. Chemical heat-engenerators, and electric thermo-regulators were quite unknown to them.)

*"Ned out fox-hunting."*

(A childish recreation, consisting of chasing tiny animals with horses and dogs. Not untended with danger, however. One historian mentions a case of breaking a leg. This was before the era of bendable bones, by means of inoculation with the vital fluid of the whale.)

*"After dinner approached him on the subject of his debts, loans, and interest."*

(These words may require some explanation. Now, when all our transactions are for *cash*, that, naturally is the only term we know. But, in those



days, Debt was a state of discomfort or disease very prevalent in all classes of society. Though seldom terminating fatally; it was most difficult to throw off, and chronically crippled large numbers of the people. Loans and interest were the initial lesion of the disease.)

*"Suggested marriage as a means of relief. Ned consented, and offered to influence his daughter on my behalf."*

(Here is a curious insight into savage life. Instead of the lady selecting and claiming her beau at the annual "Fiancée Fair," as is now the custom, it would seem that marriageable women were often made mere marketable commodities.)

*"My only fear is that she may think me too old."*

(*"Good-morning! Have you used Powers' Perpetual Youth Powders?" Advt.*)

Here, upon the manuscript, occur three large spots. At first it was conjectured that these might be genuine fossilized tears; but subsequent analysis proves them to be of the composition used by the ante-Utopians in making candles. The remaining entries are very badly written. The inditer had evidently been laboring under some form of excitement. The hand had been unsteady; and the sentences are mutilated and disjointed. The



scrawl covers a complete page, and is much mixed with blots and smudges. It commences:—

*"Decemberer 25th. 3.30 A. M. A Merry Chismas."*

(This appears to be an abbreviation. Other such examples occur on the page, suggesting the idea that the author was tired.)

*"I've done the deed and Hop is dead"*

(This seems to point to some dark tragedy wherein one "Hop" lost his life.)

*"The lady spurns my suet"*

(Can he have been a butcher?)

*"Calls me an old Foss——"*

Here the record abruptly ends.

"Our special correspondent, the world-renowned Mr. Smart, is on the site of this remarkable discovery, and it will be our privilege to present to our readers in each hourly issue, a full report of any other objects of interest which may be unearthed by the indefatigable research and enterprise of that learned antiquarian, Professor Margaret Coddle."

On a mossy stone in the centre of picturesque old ruins, sat Mr. Socrates Smart, special correspondent of "*The Fleabiter*." His surroundings



were of a nature to awaken the powerful imagination of such a man, comprising, as they did, the ghosts of bygone days. Memorials of that mysterious race of men who had their being before the mighty earthquake of ten centuries ago all but depopulated the world. Around him shattered piles of massive masonry still made some show of standing; holding together, with a remnant of their former tenacity and pride. Within these crumbling walls, one time, had doubtless been some proud man's dining hall. Yonder stricken skeleton of a window place, its gaunt and rotting stone sashes still breaking the rays of the declining sun, perchance was one day filled with gay and gaudy glass. There, where the ivy clings around that ruined portal, may once have hung rich rugs to add their air of warmth and comfort to the whole; whilst yonder gaping chimney-place, with burning logs of wood, and coal dug from the earth; diffused generous but smoky heat; around which the aborigines would gather together for their feasts and orgies. Here, where this great tree springs upward, may have stood the huge table whereon were piled innumerable masses of flesh and vegetable matter, with which the savages regaled themselves. The modern process of



blood and bone supplying, by means of compressed chemical essences and hypodermic injections, were with them an unknown science. Upon yon barren waste, serfs and slaves of the extinct Englishman may have ploughed and tilled and scratched around with their colossal hands and ineffectual implements, to keep their unproductive and empty-headed lord in ease and indolence. Here that noble creature, woman, as yet unemancipated; her unmoulded mind-power still in embryo; may have lived her listless life, a plaything and a toy; as science was to man, until it rose up and became his ruler.

Smart might have reflected thus; but, as a matter of fact, he didn't. Business before pleasure. Taking his portable restaurant from his pocket, he selected and swallowed a condensed dining tablet. He was full of work; and, not wishing to write on a full stomach, he chose a modest meal, merely consisting of the quintessence of a pint of soup, a beefsteak and oysters, potatoes, cabbage, some bread and cheese and beer. This tablet was one of the famous Dr. Tanner's brand. A silver-coated pillule, with fac-simile signature on every piece (without which none are genuine); and he immediately felt invigorated and refreshed.



Taking his stenographer from his waistcoat pocket, he proceeded to knock off an epic poem.

Let us avail ourselves of the brief moment that he is thus employed to take a cursory glance at this man of Utopia, and see what kind of creature he may be. Of dapper and diminutive build, with inordinately small hands and feet. A face delicately chiselled, remarkable for the large and luminous eyes, and a vast expanse of forehead. No beard or whiskers, and no signs of having shaved, whilst the hair on his head is of scant growth and remarkably silky. His whole form exhibits delicacy and refinement in the same ratio to the early English, as those hairy animals bore to the baboon.

Socrates Smart was a blue-stocking. One who, irrespective of sex, had dipped deep into knowledge. The frivolities, fashions and failings which characterized his fellow-men had no charms for him. Had he been born a woman he might indeed have attained some eminence. As it was, as a literary hack he was able to support his widowed father and six small brothers in comparative comfort. His sister, who should have been the chemical-sustenance-winner of the family, had gone to the bad and enlisted for a soldier. Her regiment, the Flying 45th, was now stationed in



southern Europe; and, in anticipation of a pop visit before the evening tattoo, Socrates scanned the horizon as he sat mid the ruins of Chowseltop Hall in the island of ancient Britain.

Presently a spot on the sky appeared, and increased in size until it took the shape of a gigantic bird, having wings and tail; but the body consisted of a clockwork-like conglomeration of multiplying wheels and cranks. Seated amidst these, Socrates now recognized the form of his rakish, good-natured soldier-sister, Jacqueline. She greeted him with a cheery "Hello! Socky, old boy," and settling down quite close to him, she hopped out of her sky-cycle and gave him a slap on the back which made him howl with pain. Though learned and clever, he was only a man, after all, and could not bear rough usage.

Miss Jacqueline Smart, otherwise Private Jacky Smart, was a big, finely-made girl, standing six feet in her combinations, and looking every inch a soldier. Though a family likeness existed, there was none of that sweet air of delicacy and refinement about the lady's face, which characterized that of the man. The large thoughtful eyes gave place in her to a merry pair of twinklers. More sober people thought Jacky Smart a terribly bad



lot. With a warm, generous heart, she was merely an improvident, reckless girl; the plague of her family and the pride of Battalion B.

"Well, Sock, and how is the Dad?" asked this promising young lady.

"Failing fast, Jack," said Smart. "Your conduct has very nearly broken his heart. And new ones are so expensive, let alone the cost of removing and fixing," he added, with a sorrowful sigh.

"Oh nonsense!" said the hopeful young soldier. "There are plenty of good second-hand ones to be had for a mere song. One of our girls, a full corporal, whose heart was clean smashed by her beau taking up with a Southern Sky Pilot; got a slop-surgeon to fix her up with one out of a calf. She's all right now. It only troubles her a bit twice a day, at milking time. But she gets over that by sucking her thumb."

"Well, Jacky," said Socrates, "let us talk no more on that subject." The idea of his aged father being renovated with raw veal was distasteful to his highly delicate nature. "I have been waiting fully four minutes for you," he continued. "What made you so late?"

"My machine's a bit out of order," replied Jacqueline, pointing to her sky-cycle, which looked



like a recumbent Roc. "The fact is that I and some girls of Ours got out skylarking last night; and while scampering across the Sahara, I flew foul of the Sphinx, and damaged my off forewing. I think it was the sand which got into my eyes."

Socrates simply shook his head and smiled incredulously. He knew that the desert had been thoroughly swept less than a week ago, and sand had not had time to accumulate again in any appreciable quantity.

This desert was used as a public battle-field, and some dispute having arisen between the Presidentess of Utopia and the Chief of the United States of the Southern Cross, it was proposed shortly to hold a great war-game there. The ground was now being thoroughly rolled and levelled, and made ready for the engagement.

Jacky now espied a young man wheeling a perambulator. From time immemorial nurses have had attractions for the soldier; and Smart's susceptible young sister got restless, and showed signs of wishing to say "good-bye" and go upon the mash. So Socrates, with a heavy heart, gathered up his poem, bestowed a coin and a kiss upon the black sheep of the family, sadly walked toward the spot where had been erected the special



Pneumatic Passenger Tube, and was soon flashing on his way to the central office of *The Fleabiter*.

Left alone, Private Smart glanced proudly down at her regimental uniform, lit a cigarette, and waited the approaching baby-tender with a swaggering air of confidence and assurance.

"Good-day, my dear," said the gallant daughter of Mars.

The poor man blushed and giggled, and faltered out "Good-day," in his timid basso-profundo voice.

"Is it too cold in this northern climate to sit down for a while, my charmer?" asked Private Jacqueline.

The simple man said it was very cold, no doubt, but he thought that he might risk it for a little time, since the lady was so pressing.

"I suppose you do not live in these parts?" essayed the soldier.

"Oh! no, miss," said the nurse. "Our people live in Southern France; but I am sent here every day to give the child an airing. We come by Aerycar."

"And do they make your delicate little hands wheel that clumsy thing about?" asked the jovial Jack, giving the perambulator a push which sent it down a little hillock and left the nurse's hands



at liberty for a gentle squeeze. "Why don't they get you an automatic baby-carriage with perpetual motion rockers and musical lullaby attachment?"

"Ah! you see, master has got a fad," replied the man. "The old fool believes in nothing modern. He is always crying up the good old times of one thousand years ago: and has a craze for anything old-fashioned. This perambulator was built after an ancient model in the World's Museum."

"But why does he send you here with that blessed kid?" asked the young lady.

"For the purpose of moulding the baby's mind," replied the nurseman. "Master says through breathing the musty air which hangs around these old ruins, the child will imbibe a taste for the antique. Early impressions are most important, he argues; and he fondles the brat with loving little words selected at random from the Latin Lexicon. Poor thing! no wonder its hair is turning gray before it is six months old.—But perhaps that may come from its habit of scratching its head," he added half aloud.

"I suppose it cannot talk yet," said Jacqueline.

"Oh! can't it?" ejaculated the nurseman.



"You should just hear it recite 'The Frogs of Aristophanes' in its little croaking voice. Shall I make it?" and he rose to do so.

"Certainly not," hastily cried the soldier. "Not on my account. Do you go home alone?"

"No," sighed the smitten man. "Professor Coddle returns with us."

"Professor Coddle! who is she?"

"My master's sister-in-law; and a very learned woman. A great antiquarian, and a mistress of chemical and electrical science. She is conducting excavations in these old ruins."

"Does she live with you?"

"No," continued the chattering nurseman. "She has a laboratory near the summit of Mount Teneriffe, where she makes her experiments and spends most of her time. I'm told it's an awful place; full of cats she has brought to life from mummies, creeping lizards revived from stone, and snake-like things that have no heads, which she has resurrected from old fossils. I think they call them ammonites."

"Horrible!" said the soldier, with a shudder. "She could have faced a thousand enemies on the battle plain, especially now there was no hurting at a fight; but the thought of anything creeping



scared her. She was a woman, and the old instinct of the animal still remained.

"That's not the worst," continued the mystery-loving nurseman, in a melodramatic whisper. "I heard her talking to master last night; and she said that she had perfected a process by which she could endow with life the fossilized or mummified remains of pre-earthquakian man. She only needs a suitable specimen to experiment upon."

"Good gracious!" gasped Jacqueline Smart. The prospect of a crowd of those lawless savages being turned loose upon Utopia was enough to take one's breath away. On the other hand, the warrior reflected that they prove better sport than such vapid and colorless wretches as the men of her own day. Intellect is not everything, after all. Woman, once content to be sweet and lovable, was now arrogant, stern, and austere. Man, once brave, burly, and boisterous, had become simple and weak.

"What is your name?" asked Jacky of her companion.

"My name is McFuss. Good-bye; I must go."

"One moment," shouted private Jacky.

"What is your master's name?"

"Chowseltop," replied the man.



"By Jove!" said Miss Smart to herself, as she vaulted into her sky-cycle: "I'll bet my boots he is the father of Captain Charlie Chowsetop; the handsome officer who commands my company."

And away she flew.

Two hours later, Edward Chowsetop, nurse McFuss's master, and brother to the celebrated Professor Margaret Coddle; whilst practicing the ancient art of boxing before a mirror at his home on the Riviera; heard the automatic door-mat at work, and he knew that his sister-in-law had arrived. Her recreation midst the ruins of Britain was of a nature calculated to stain her boots with mud, and a brush, shine and polish were necessary before entering the spic-and-span hall. Impatient for news of her exploits, he went to meet her with as much speed as his somewhat inconvenient costume would allow.

With his craze for antiquities, Mr. Chowsetop affected the dress of a cavalier of olden times. That is, he got as near it as he knew how. He wore very tight breeches and very big boots of the English Cromwellian Period, with a pair of huge spurs fully eight inches long, in the management of which he was not particularly efficient; a breast-plate of steel and a cavalry sword; the one having



been dug up at Cressy, and the other at Aldershot. He carried an assegai and knob-kerrie from the cumuli of Zambesia; and his long flowing hair, dyed golden, was surmounted by a black silk top hat. Adding to these the fact that he wore boxing-gloves and painted his face after the manner of the aboriginal Red Man of the Great Western Republic; it will be allowed that he presented a most imposing figure, thoroughly typical of that dead-and-gone chivalry for which he cherished so fervent a veneration.

"Tally Ho! Molly," he said; saluting that learned lady after the courtly manner of the olden times, with a hearty "view hallo."

"Sit down," said the scientist; and he would have done so had it been possible in his cavalierly costume. But it wasn't. However, it was clear that Molly had some communication of importance to make, so he placed a chair for her, and signified that he was all attention.

"It has long been my ambition," she began, "to secure a perfect specimen of petrified humanity on which to try my new 'elixir vitæ;' but hitherto my efforts have not been successful. Although it is not necessary that the organization be intact, such small matters as a missing arm or leg being



of no great importance, still in subjects procurable it has always happened that such fragments as these limbs have not been missing; whereas the other parts have. I have made an odd foot dance in time to music, and develop bunions in colder climates. I have made a right hand, evidently that of a woman, return a gentle pressure on being squeezed and scratch when put upon. Still these manifestations of my power to restore life are far from satisfactory. At last, however, I have myself unearthed a perfect subject."

"You don't say so!" gasped Chowseltop.

Although this expression was undoubtedly classical, one in frequent usage with the early English, still it was a foolish speech; for, besides being untrue, it answered no purpose whatever.

Professor Molly, however, with a smile of superiority affected not to notice the interruption, and continued:—

"In the old house where I am pursuing archæological and antiquarian research, I discovered an old manuscript. Here it is." She produced a musty, mildewed book.

Chowseltop reached eagerly to look—but withdrawing the curiosity, she proceeded, "For full description, see *The Fleabiter*, 19 P.M. edition.

"The next blast unearthed what at first I sup-



posed to be the effigy of a man, cut out of stone. This later find I did not think worth mentioning to the reporter sent from the newspaper office. He had barely gone, however, when the right hand of the curious figure was accidentally broken off. On examination of the fracture, with a view to cementing, I discovered in the interior a complete section of the osseous, muscular, nervous, sinuous and sanguineous system pertaining to man. Here, Ned, is the hand."

Chowseltop, in his eagerness to grasp the wonder, dropped it on his toes, causing him to howl prodigiously, for the stone was of great weight.

Miss Coddle was exceedingly wroth at his clumsiness, and would not again let her precious relic go from her hand. But she pointed out to the crest-fallen Chowseltop how the strata of bone had become alabaster, the sinews iron-stone, whilst the blood vessels appeared to be garnet or ruby. She proposed to carry this fragment to her laboratory, and there apply her elixir. If the result came out as she supposed, she had at last attained the height of the antiquarian's ambitions. She had realized the dream of the scientists. She was the fortunate discoverer and possessor of the first complete specimen, she was the sole proprietor of the world's greatest wonder. She had found A FOSSIL MAN.



Professor Margaret Coddle now ran on with a rhapsodical rigmarole respecting the marvellous results which would accrue from her possible revivification of a fossilized man. The lost arts should be regained. History should be revised and set right. Traditions quashed or verified. The earth's surface should be surveyed, and buried treasures found. The events of bygone centuries revealed, and the whole world revolutionized by an old fossil.

Chowseltop was now solemnly pledged to the most profound secrecy as to the professor's marvellous discovery. Being a man, he immediately made a mental note of such bosom friends as he was bursting to tell it to.

That night, in the seclusion of her laboratory, Professor Coddle experimented with her improved "elixir vitæ" upon the fossil hand, with such success that within two minutes it grew warm and soft. At the end of ten it felt around, and seemed to wish to grasp something. She offered it a drinking glass, which it immediately elevated to about the place where its mouth should have been. Then it seized a pen and wrote in bold early English characters four words only.

Those four words were, *I am Lord Ammonite.*



CHAPTER V.<sup>7</sup>

THE FOSSIL MAN LIVES.

(Extract from *The Hourly Telephone*. 7 A. M.  
April 2d, 2894.)

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HA! HA!! HA!!! LEFT AGAIN.

AN EVENING PAPER TRUE TO ITS NAME!

IT GUSHES OVER A MOLE-HILL, AND MISSES A  
MOUNTAIN.

PROFESSOR CODDLE UNEARTHS THE WONDER OF  
THE WORLD.

A FOSSIL MAN! A FOSSIL MAN!!

---

"Our cute contemporary, *The Fleabiter*, last evening devoted two columns to a highly colored account of an ancient manuscript discovered by our esteemed scientist, Professor Margaret Coddle;



and appended copious comments thereto; which served to exhibit the gross and lamentable ignorance so rank and irrepressible amongst the members of that feeble journal's staff. This trumpery rag grandiloquently enlarged upon the importance of such a discovery as a few scraps of antique manuscript, signifying nothing. It bragged of its special pneumatic tubes. It artfully contrived to interlard its so-called literary matter with vulgar advertisements; thus degrading its columns to the level of an old-time society paper. And it managed to miss the important announcement—the matter of real interest which we, with our more perfect means of procuring news, are happily enabled to lay before our innumerable readers this morning.

“On the scene of the discovery of *The Fleabiter's* miserable manuscript, whilst the tortoise-like scribe who represents our effete contemporary was crawling back to his office, Professor Coddle was presenting to a wondering world the first complete and undoubtedly genuine specimen of a Fossil Man.

“There is no doubt of the bona-fides of this marvellous acquisition. One of the secret members of our private information staff heard the astounding news late last night; and at daybreak this



morning our representative was on the spot viewing the curiosity.

"There he lies, on his back, in the identical costume of the ancient Britons. A mass of thick material wound closely around his portly frame, and bound tightly with a piece of coarse rope. By some remarkably rapid process, all these accessories have been petrified, together with the body; which is that of a well matured man of handsome proportions and presence.

"In two instances only does this creature of the dark ages differ from the men of our day. He has what appears to have been a mass of hair on the face and chin; and is possessed of one hand only; the right arm terminating abruptly at the wrist.

"We shall be able to give more detailed descriptions in our later editions; and we are for the present content to claim the honor of being the first to make known to the world this crowning wonder of the twenty-ninth century."

When Miss Coddle read the above in her morning paper, she knew that she had been foolish in confiding the news of her discovery to her brother-in-law; for he was the only instrument through which the tidings could have filtered. How true



is the aphorism "No man can keep a secret!" By this time the whole world was cognizant of her good fortune. She knew that the announcement would attract crowds of curiosity mongers, scientific investigators, and pleasure-seekers to her secluded treasure-ground at Yapham in Ancient Britain; and, like a sensible woman, she determined to turn the opportunity to account. By delivering a lecture to the assembled multitude and performing her modern miracle of revivification within their sight, she would advertise herself, and thus gain respect and renown as the veritable queen of scientists. She therefore dressed herself with care; and pocketing her instruments together with a vial of her marvellous elixir; set out betimes.

Arrived at Yapham, she found her expectations more than realized. The place looked like a fair. All the world and her husband seemed to have turned out to get a glimpse of the wonderful fossil man. Among the crowd were not only Utopians; but numberless visitors from the other great countries of the earth. Natives of the United States of the Southern Cross, and citizens of the Great Western Republic. *The Hourly Telephone* boasts "the largest circulation in the world."

From very early morning the pneumatic tubes



and aerycars had been packed to suffocation; whilst the sky had been so full of aerostats and sky-cycles of all sorts and sizes that the most skilful drivers found it difficult to avoid accident by collision. The highway of the atmosphere had presented such an appearance as it might upon a race day when the "blue ribbon" was to be run for. The ethereal police quite early issued elaborate traffic regulations, but were powerless to enforce them. It was estimated that fully half a million had congregated around the ruins of Chowsestop Hall, when the neighboring cocks crew ten o'clock.

At that hour Professor Coddle appeared upon the scene, and the ovation which greeted her might have been heard at the Capital City of Utopia, fully two thousand miles away; if the wind had been strong enough, and in the right direction. She modestly bowed her acknowledgments, and was gratified to see that her assistants, grasping the situation, had taken time by the fore-lock by erecting barriers to keep an open space within the ruins of the dining-hall. They had also erected a lecturing platform, on which was placed, in a standing position, the block of stone which had caused a world-wide excitement.

Professor Margaret Coddle mounted the rostrum;



and, having placed her scientific instruments, together with the bottle of "elixir vitæ," in a prominent position, cleared her throat and commenced thus :—

(For the following report of Professor Coddle's speech we are indebted to the *Old York Herald*, an enterprising journal of the Great Western Republic.)

"Fellow Utopians, sister scientists, gentlemen and ladies, I am very proud to see you here to-day, upon this auspicious occasion; for it affords me an opportunity to say a few words to you upon a subject which is dear to all our hearts—which is the main-spring of our existence." (*Cheers.*) "I am glad to meet you here, upon this auspicious occasion, in such goodly numbers; that I may first tell you of the vigor and growth, that I may remind you of the puissant attainments, and that I may finally exhibit before your eyes the culminating triumph of that great power to which the whole world bows; which is alike our servant and our master; our ruler and our slave: that almighty sovereign, Science." (*Loud and prolonged cheering.*)

"Science, it may be well to remind you, upon this auspicious occasion, was born in great obscu-



city. The exact date and place of the conqueror's birth must ever remain a mystery. It is believed, however, that it was cradled in ancient Greece and Rome. It passed its infancy amidst the early English who flourished around the spot on which we stand, on this auspicious occasion ; before the universal earthquake of one thousand years ago demolished their institutions, their cities and their people at one fell swoop. More correctly speaking, 'hove to' the English race with one gigantic heave." (*Cheers.*) "At that time, Science had practically forsaken this insular land, and taken up its quarters amongst the pioneers of the Great Western Republic. Hence it escaped the general destruction." (*Cheers.*) "There, under the fostering care of such old masters as Edison, it became a promising stripling." (*A voice, "Three cheers for Edison." Cheering.*)

"Upon this auspicious occasion," (*laughter*)—"To-day, it will be my privilege to show you how, in that great land where the emancipation of women was gradually working a revolution ; ladies finally took the promising youth in hand, and from that time until—until"—(*a voice, "This auspicious occasion." Laughter*)—"this auspicious occasion"—(*prolonged laughter.*)—Until now ; it has in-



creased in strength and power." (*Hear! Hear!*)

"In the hands of women, it has become the ruler of the Universe. It was a woman, Professor Darling, who took up the ancient Evolution Theory; and, by practically applied science, reversed the natural order of proceeding, so that man is now degenerating, and will soon become an ape. After that, probably an oyster." (*Masculine murmurs of disapproval.*) "Whilst woman, having had her mind moulded in a different form, with succeeding centuries is approaching to the apex of an angel." (*Great female enthusiasm.*) "Who was it enlarged upon the old-time idea of inoculation by bacillus and virus, and with the potent aid of maturer science killed the curing art by the perfection of the preventive? Doctor Jennie, the eminent physician." (*A voice, "Good Old Jennie."*) "Where is now the sickness and the illness of the ancients? In our enlightened age the infant is mildly invested with every known disease, whilst yet within its cradle; and forever afterwards is proof against the ills that flesh is heir to. It is supplied with unbreakable bones, unbruisable flesh and impenetrable skin; so that no dread of accidents need awaken in it the almost extinct sense of fear. Only at such time as the



works wear out with sheer senility need it prepare for death." (*Cheers.*)

"That magnificent woman, Professor Buxom, it was who wedded science to nature; and, from the hitherto unfruitful theory called 'Circumvolution of Matter' bred such invaluable results. In the older days, gross and uneducated kine ruthlessly devoured the grass and flowers of the field. Now our clean and comely cattle are fed exclusively on curds and whey. They thus supply their own sustenance. They are, so to speak, within themselves a perfect, revolving, self-sustaining system. Thus the acme of economy in cattle-farming is attained." (*Hear! Hear!*)

"This is merely a boiling down of the general principles of nature. For instance, this form of mine, as it stands upon this auspicious—upon this platform; has undoubtedly existed since the creation of all things." (*A voice, "It looks like it." Commotion; during which the interrupter was removed.*) "When it dies its component parts will be disseminated, and take their separate functions in the great scheme of scientific nature. Nothing in the world is lost." (*An uproar, and cries of "Stop thief."*) "One thousand years ago the various laments that constitute one of us, by a coincidence, or



rather, a natural fitness of things, may have been combined as now. If that was so in my case, the good womanly spirit which inhabited my frame has taken excellent care of it, for I find myself in splendid bodily health." (*Cheers.*)

"And now, gentlemen and ladies, having briefly mentioned some, out of the many illustrious scientists who have adorned our sex, I trust I may be permitted, without fear of egotism, upon this auspicious oc——" (*loud laughter, and cries of "Go on!"*)

"I trust I may be permitted to claim the honor of having enriched the entire world by the discovery of this priceless relic by my side. This genuine Fossil Man." (*Loud cheers.*) "Moreover, I have come here, upon this—hem!—platform, prepared to demonstrate the latest and greatest achievement of Chemical Science." (*Hear! Hear!*) "The marvel I propose to show to you is the product of my own unaided and unremittent study and experimentalization." (*Hear! Hear!*) "The ancients could, by means of impotent and immature electricity, endow inanimate flesh and blood with momentary semblance of life. I can do more." (*Bravo!*) "I have invented an elixir which, being insinuated into this cold hard stone, will restore it to its former state of warmth and life." (*Great*



*excitement. Loud and long cheering ; during which the Professor bowed repeatedly, and took a little liquid refreshment.)*

“Not only will my marvellous mixture revivify the fossil man ; but it will also restore the costume in which he is clothed.” (*Cheers.*) “I am about to demonstrate these astounding facts before your eyes.” (*Loud cheering.*) “As it were, before the eyes of the whole civilized world.” (*Cheers.*) “You will observe that the figure appears to be wrapped around with cerements and robes. There is no doubt that these were the robes of some great ancient dignitary. You will also observe”—(*A voice “Get on with the show.” Loud clamoring, during which the Professor vainly strove to make herself heard.*)

The report, after this, is more flowery and less authentic than we could wish, so here we will drop quoting from the *Old York Herald*, and chronicle the subsequent proceedings after our own sweet will and method.

Professor Coddle, seeing it was impossible to further address the assembled multitude, proceeded to open her instrument case ; and, selecting therefrom a tiny, self-acting, dynamic drill ; without further preface she commenced to perforate the stone



figure through the back of the clothes, in the direction that the spine should be.

There was immediately a breathless silence in the vast crowd, and every neck was stretched in eager anticipation.

Having penetrated far enough ; a fact which she ascertained by sampling the contents of the hollow drill, after the manner of a cheese-taster ; her next care was to cauterize the broken segment of the wrist ; so that when the blood should liquify, there should be no unseemly mess. This done, she placed one end of an ingenious injector in her bottle of elixir vitæ, and inserted the other end to the full extent of the boring.

The excitement was now intense. Barriers were broken down, and the surging masses momentarily threatened to overturn Miss Coddle, the fossil figure, platform and all. But just at this moment Captain Charlie Chowsetop ; who had been secretly summoned ; arrived on the scene, with a detachment of the Flying 45th, and order was restored.

Now came an anxious time of waiting. The mixture worked slower on this gigantic mass of stone than on smaller fossils with which Professor Coddle had hitherto experimented, and that good



lady began to fear that she had made some error in its preparation. Not a pleasant reflection, this. Failure before that crowd meant ignominious disgrace, if not actual rough usage. Still, without betraying any anxiety, she continued to pump the subtle, life-giving essence into the stony spine.

At the end of two minutes, her patience was rewarded. A murmur amongst the masses plainly told that they had observed some change. She paused a moment for inspection, and beheld the hard stone wrappings softening and assuming a different tint. As she gazed, a portion of the rope girdle became limp and dangled downward. This was the sign for a shout of recognition from the crowd.

Again she pumped with renewed confidence. The clinging costume assumed the hue and texture of blankets and rugs. Next, the hair upon the head and face took ruddy semblance of life. Then five hundred thousand hearts leapt in wild excitement and wonder at the sound of—what?

A hiccough. Surely never was so vast a multitude so deeply moved by just a little hiccough.

Only a hiccough. But a hiccough emanating from the interior organization of a man who had been dead—petrified—a lump of stone these thousand of years past.



The first feeling of awe quickly gave place to a terrific shout of delight; so loud that the fossil opened his eyes and looked around him, like one just awakened from sleep.

Cheer after cheer rent the air, and Miss Coddle bowed and smiled as if she was wound up and not likely to run down for half an hour.

Meantime the late fossil, after yawning, and otherwise pulling himself together; stood regarding the professor with a curious puzzled look. But when he gazed upon the mob, he blushed visibly, and tried to pull his wrappings closer around him. It was then he first found that his right hand was missing. This seemed greatly to perplex him. Turning to Captain Charlie Chowseletop, who had dismounted and stood close by, the fossil spoke his first words.

Somewhat thickly, but still audibly, he said:—

"I offered you my hand last night and you refused it. Now some bum has been and stolen it."

Presently, while the professor was still acknowledging the applause bestowed on her, the fossil laughed aloud and said:—

"What's the matter with old Molly?"

This caused that lady to stop abruptly, and turn towards him, marvelling how he could thus know



her family pet name. Clearly these ancients had power to see into the future, and she made a mental memorandum for future investigation.

"I am Professor Coddle," she said with dignity, "and you, sir, are Lord Ammonite."

Why did Captain Charlie start angrily at mention of his lordship's title? We shall see presently.

"Professor Coddle!" laughed Ammonite. "That's very funny. But where are we, Molly; and who are all these people?"

"You are in Utopia, my lord," she said; "and these people have assembled to see you brought back to life."

"Brought back to life! What do you mean? I know that punch was strong; but—good God! Miss Charlie!" he cried, turning imploringly to the captain, "you saw me last. I was not myself. I was foolish, mad perhaps; but not—not dead. No, not dead. Say that I was not dead."

The old man was painfully pathetic as he waited for a reply. His odd hand and mutilated arm stretched forth as if to ward off the words he feared.

"Yes," said the young officer, "ten minutes since you were an old fossil."

"An old fossil!" gasped Ammonite.



"Brought to life by me," added Miss Coddle "You live now. You who lived one thousand years ago."

"One thousand years ago!" murmured the bewildered man. "Great Heavens! I see it all. The Gods have granted me my wish. I who lived one thousand years ago. I live now. The now which was to me one thousand years to come," and the poor old man sank senseless to the ground.

The shock had been too much for him. He had a weak heart; but stronger men have been staggered under less exciting circumstances.

They bore him, just as he was, to Chowseltop's villa, on the banks of the Mediterranean. Such was the enthusiasm that the wings were taken off Professor Coddle's aerostat, which carried her and the fainting Ammonite. They were borne, shoulder high, along the thoroughfare of the air by a thousand admiring sky-cyclists, who lingered around until the following bulletin was posted on the garden gate.

*"The Fossil Man has recovered consciousness and enjoys a peaceful sleep. Breathing heavy. Hiccoughs still continue, though less heavy. Pulse and temperature normal. Please keep off the grass."*



## CHAPTER VI.

### NEW SPIRITS IN OLD BODIES.

IN order to understand Captain Charlie Chow-seltop's anger on learning Lord Ammonite's title, it is necessary to make a little retrospective digression, so we will do it right away.

There is perhaps no time so pleasant for a stroll over the Utopian sylvan glades, as in the summer twilight, when all nature is tucking itself up to rest; save where the belated lark sings its even-song, warbling on poised wing, after the manner of the educated birds of this enlightened age the latest popular song of liberty. For the sons, or rather, daughters of science, have recently cultivated a breed of larks with excellent ears for music; and established compulsory schools for the harmonic training of the birds of the air.

How sweet it is to hear the feathered choir, in the distant woodland, sing their deliciously blended part songs, wherein the high soprano of the night-



ingale, the tenor of the thrush, the mezzo of the linnet, and the basso of the owl, sweetly combine with melodious effect in some soft lullaby. It fills one with a feeling of reverence and awe to wander there amidst the simple works of Nature; which are thus set aside and improved out of all knowledge by glorious and all-powerful science. How peaceful and refreshing it is to ramble in the gloaming o'er the deserted fields, when the laborers have stored their solar concentrators which enable them to make hay while the sun does not shine; packed and put away their cloud-dissolving apparatus for the production of artificial rain; and gone to their well-earned rest.

Amidst a scene of such primitive purity and beauty, on the evening immediately preceding the resurrection of the fossil man, wandered Salvator Rosa Stubbs, the simple village painter.

This guileless child of innocence, in his modest white muslin trousers adorned with home-made lace frills, his loose bodice of pearly pink serving to suggest more than to conceal the classic beauty of his supple figure; with his sunbonnet dangling carelessly in his hand and his long hair floating in the breeze, looks as pretty as paint. As he stoops to pick a bunch of the delicately-tinted daisies with



which the luxuriant grass is spangled; daisies fostered by the almighty hand of science, and exquisitely colored with the latest fashionable hues, such as "crushed butterfly," "rusty iron" and "powdered blue;" does he not appear a perfect picture? True, he is slightly out of drawing, having legs of the regulation length; and his coloring is faulty, his hair being of commonplace brown, and his eyes an ordinary hazel. But what being is so perfect that the art critic may not cavil at mere Nature's handiwork?

Stubbs is but a village painter, of unsophisticated heart and weak intellect. Thus he is the pride of all the girls for miles around. Thus it is that all the lasses long for his broad, appreciative grin. Thus it is that flowers are laid in all seasons at his modest portals. That when he is on a ladder, painting as pout, the girls stand beneath and sigh in unison, although he heeds them not, but whistles lustily and dabs his paint on thick. And thus, alas! it is that he attracted the attention of that gay young officer, Captain Charlie Chowsetop; who swore a terrible oath that, come what might, Sally, the simple village painter, should be hers; aye, if she had to carry him off bodily—ladder, paint-pots, brush and all.



Of course she might have selected him at the local Fiancée Fair, but soldiers were seldom marrying women, and we regret to say that the intentions of the reprobate Charlie were decidedly dishonorable. We would like to have encouraged the contrary idea; we would like to have thought well of the girl, but this is a truthful history, and the truth must be told. We are determined that no consideration shall tempt us from our duty, however painful that duty may be. We only deal in hard and unadulterated fact.

Poor Sally's head was turned by the attentions of his dashing soldier lover. As already stated, he was of weak intellect, and through no fault of his own; it was hereditary. Tradition stated that some centuries ago a Stubbs had cultivated eccentricity, which, in succeeding generations, had become chronic.

So Salvator Rosa, the pet of the village, the pride of the country side, the simple village idiot, wandered aimlessly along the flowery paths which led, he knew not whither. No wonder he was startled when Captain Charlie reined her aerostat, and vaulting lightly from the machine, threw the anchor cable to her servant, Private Jacky Smart, and stood bowing by his side.



Charlie Chowseletop was indeed the sort of a girl to turn any fellow's head. Tall, handsome, and well formed, in her faultlessly fitting uniform, she looked a very Minerva amongst women.

The heart of Sally Stubbs beat fast at the thought that such a heroine should deign to love a modest little country man like him. Indeed, he would ere now have fallen an easy prey to Charlie's fascination, but for one thing lacking midst the many charms of that young officer—she had no title. In his simple, childish way, Sally had always dreamed that the brave suitor who should carry him off should be at least a lady in her own right. Hence the weak-minded, frivolous young thing had whistled on his ladder when humble swains had sighed below. Last night, when Charlie had been more importunate than usual, he had consented to be hers if she would but invest him with a title. Of course the trusting boy thought of no love that was not sanctified by marriage. Charlie had promised that the title should be forthcoming.

They met and kissed, Sally showing some circumspect resistance.

Then, in his unsophisticated habit of coming



straight to business, he asked: "Have you got the title?"

"No, dearest," said Captain Charlie, "I have not got it yet, but I am in treaty for a beauty—one that will fit my darling nicely."

"Fit me!" said the painter; "but what of you, my love? Is it not large enough for both? I thought you would have got one for yourself, so that when we married I might share it with you."

"No, little one," replied the girl, "I promised you a title. I do not care for such toys. It is a male title that I intend to buy."

"Oh! you are too generous, too unselfish," murmured Stubbs. The silly man did not tumble to the fact that if his lover bought a female title she must necessarily marry him if she would bestow any portion of it on him; whereas, the gift of a male title left her hands unfettered.

"What sort of a title is it?" ingenuously enquired Sally, as he nestled his little head on Charlie's bosom. "And where did you get it?"

"My dear, I have not got it yet," replied the officer, toying with the sweet man's flossy ringlets. "I saw it in the window of an old curiosity shop."

"Oh! Then it is not a new one," said little Sally, pouting with disappointment.



"You silly child!" remarked young Chowseletop, "don't you know that genuine old titles are more sought after than brand new ones? Everything old is very fashionable, and this one dates back before the universal earthquake."

Poor simple Sally was satisfied. At length he asked—

"What is the title, Charlie?"

"Lord Ammonite," laconically replied that lady.

"Lord Ammonite!" blissfully repeated Stubbs. "How lovely! Much prettier than my own name. Is it not?"

"Darling, you will always be simple Sally Stubbs to me," said the gallant soldier, caressing him fondly, in spite of the smell of paint and putty which pervaded his clothes.

"No. When we are married I shall be Lord and you Lady Ammonite," said Salvator Rosa, looking lovingly into his warrior's eyes.

"We shall see," said Chowseletop, turning away to order her aerostat. She feared to meet those pure confiding azure orbs.

"When will you have the title for me, Charlie dear?" asked Stubbs, as his valiant suitor prepared to mount and fly away.



"As soon as the bill of sale can be properly registered," said the captain, throwing him a kiss.

"Till then, farewell," responded Salvator Rosa Stubbs, and he strolled off to his humble cottage, feeling the happiest of men.

Now we know why Captain Charlie Chowsetop was annoyed on finding the fossil man rightful owner to the title of Lord Ammonite. She foresaw difficulties which might arise to wreck her amorous designs on the simple village painter, Sally Stubbs.

"Tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep," had entirely dispelled the fogging fumes of that fatal "Loving Cup" quaffed by Lord Ammonite one thousand years ago, when that nobleman opened his eyes in Chowsetop's best bedroom. At first he could not tell where he was. Everything seemed strange to him. Overhead he saw an ivory handle and dial, by which the temperature of the bedclothes could be regulated to suit the most fastidious tastes. Nor was it necessary that all parts of the bed should be the same. Those who suffered from cold feet could warm the toes alone; whilst for neuralgic sleepers the ancient remedy of a woollen shawl or old stocking was a superfluity. He ascertained these facts by trying the apparatus;



but, through inexperience, singeing his whiskers and nearly freezing his toes off, he was compelled to jump with great rapidity from his couch. This he did without looking before he leaped.

"Help!" he cried out lustily, as he found the floor sinking beneath him. In vain. He felt a rush of air. The darkness closed around him. He was sinking, in a cage, as it were, down some deep shaft; albeit seated on an easy lounge, with an odor of hot coffee permeating the air. Another moment and a clear electric light burst forth, showing his strange prison to be a small compartment like a hotel elevator. Soap, towels, *café-au-lait*, a pair of fried soles, and the morning newspaper were conveniently at hand. But whither was he going? He was too full of surprise and fear to read the news or sip his fragrant mocha. Presently the side of the lift fell out with a splash. He was in a bathing-house, some few yards within the waters of a sunlit sea.

The gulls, which hovered around, rejoicing in the bracing morning air, sang the latest popular nautical songs. All nature seemed very tempting. He longed to bathe, but was afraid the water might be cold. Again, he had no clothes to dress himself in afterwards; and could not, with his left



hand alone, have readjusted the rugs and wrappings in which he had fainted and fallen asleep last night.

While cogitating thus, mechanically and absently demolishing the fried soles, what was his surprise to see his old friend Chowsektop, attired in a facsimile of the rugs and blankets he then wore.

"Why, Ned," he cried, "have they dug you up too?" and he held out his handless arm, eager for a hearty shake.

Edward Chowsektop was astonished to find the fossil man knew his name. Nevertheless he shook the stump and said—

"How do you find yourself this morning?"

"How do I find myself here?" replied Lord Ammonite.

"You sat down in the bathing chair, my lord; and of course it transported you to the beach. These appliances are in every room of my villa. I had just had my dip when you slid down."

"And these fish," commenced Ammonite, with his mouth full of the article in question.

"I ordered them. I thought you would like your breakfast in bulk. I presume you took it so in those glorious times when you originally lived.



We eat exactly the same things now, but in a condensed chemical form."

"But why are you dressed in that curious way, Ned Chowsetop?" inquired Lord Ammonite.

"Out of compliment to your lordship," replied the Utopian. "You call it curious; but is this not the every-day costume of your ancient Britons?"

"Certainly not," laughed the ex-fossil.

The antiquarian looked cast down and disheartened.

"Look here, Ned, I don't want to bathe. How do I get back?"

"Pop in. I'll go with you," said Chowsetop, entering the bathing lift. He touched a button, and they were quickly on their way to the best bedroom again.

During the short journey they sat, each silently scrutinizing the other. Chowsetop was puzzled to guess how this creature of ten centuries ago could possibly know his name; and, indeed appear to be on terms of familiar friendship with him. Ammonite's brain was in a whirl of amazement and doubt. Could it be that Ned and Molly were having a gigantic joke with him? That presently he would find himself in the old dining-room at Chowsetop Hall, with Charlie, and Smart, and



Stubbs, and McFuss, laughing at the trick they had played? There were two strong arguments against this, however. How was it that his right hand was missing; and what had become of Ned's whiskers? If, on the other hand, it was true that he was really restored to life after a lapse of one thousand years, how was it that Ned was here too? And Molly Coddle, and Charlie Chowsetop, whom he remembered having seen last evening, before he lost consciousness?

When they stepped off the elevator, they mutually sat down for a chat. Ammonite commenced.

"Look here, Ned Chowsetop, tell me, just in so many words, how I come to be here; why you are here; and whatever possessed you to shave?"

"Shave!" echoed the Utopian. "What is that?"

"What has become of your whiskers?" pursued Ammonite.

"Whiskers!" repeated Chowsetop, as he mentally reviewed the Latin, Greek, Sanscrit, and other dead languages with which he was familiar; but he could not recall such a word. The nearest he could come to it was the "ouisky" of the ancient Hibernians. So he shook his head and said, "I do not understand."



Ammonite pulled his beard, and his newly-found old friend grasped the idea.

"Oh! face hair," said he. "There is none of that now. Have you also got a tail?"

Ammonite looked indignant, and said, "Certainly not."

"Ah! you are perhaps of too recent a race," complacently continued Chowseltop. "But your great grandfather doubtless had one. The theory of progressive evolution which deprives me of whiskers, being also retrogressive, probably provided your ancestors with tails. But, tell me, how comes it that you know me by name and sight?"

"That I know not, unless you are my old friend of one thousand years ago, brought back to life, like myself. First give me full particulars of my restitution."

This Chowseltop did as amply, yet as briefly as such an old gossip could; whilst the ancient Briton listened in breathless wonder. Only once did he angrily interrupt, and pour forth a flood of invective against the careless laborers who had clumsily bereft him of his dexter digitorial appendage.

The recital concluded, he was impatient to again meet the wondrous professor, in whom he recog-



nized a second edition of his old friend and former sweetheart, Miss Margaret Coddle; so, after a hasty toilet, he followed his friend to the salon.

Here the whole of the family were anxiously awaiting his arrival; and telling the wonderful story to the great Samuel Lectern, who had just popped in, as usual, at meal times. "The great Sammy" was a celebrated droll. A man of funereal appearance and halting intellect; he was just the sort of person the enlightened Utopians were ever ready to laugh their loudest at, and hail as the king of Society comedians.

When Ammonite entered, he was greeted with a general shout of "Here it comes!" This rather staggered his lordship. Peers of the realm were not accustomed to be called "it." He felt hurt, and proudly drawing himself up, he said, "I am Lord Ammonite."

This, of course, was no news to Professor Coddle, who had the fact in his own handwriting away at her laboratory.

Captain Charlie inaudibly swore. She had hoped there might have been some mistake. She would probably meet Sally Stubbs that evening; and, going minus the title, feared a row with that artless young thing.



"This is my sister-in-law, Professor Margaret Coddle, to whom you owe your present existence," said Chowseltop.

"Why, Molly, you know me," said the fossil. "We were old sweethearts once."

At this every one laughed; except the professor, who greeted Charlie with a look of withering scorn, as that disrespectful young lady murmured: "Aunt Molly's age has always been a mystery, but I never took her for quite a thousand years."

"It may be possible, Lord Ammonite," said the doctress of science, "that we have met in the remote past, when the combined chemicals which form my body were utilized by another spirit or life; but I doubt not that you will find my mind cast in a different mould to that which animated my person one thousand years ago."

Ammonite said he was sorry to hear it. A most ungraceful speech. Chowseltop marvelled at such ungallantry in one from the lauded land of chivalry. But his lordship was already beginning to think that the kindly Molly Coddle of the unmoulded mind was preferable to this pompous blue-stock-  
ing.

"Captain Charlie, my daughter:" said the squire. (We must call him "the squire;" for so



Ammonite addressed him, an honor which Chowsestop greatly appreciated.)

"How d'ye do, old chappy?" said that hopeful young officer.

"When I met you before," replied Ammonite, sternly, "you were as charming a girl as one could wish to see. I fear I shall find you much changed."

Captain Chowsestop laughed and said, "It's a complimentary old fossil, anyway." From that moment a bitter enmity sprung up between the girl of the period and the man of the past.

"This is 'The great Sammy Lectern,' our famous comic actor."

"I'm pleased to meet you," said his lordship. "I perceive you are the product of that Church and Stage Guild which was just started in my time. And there is McFuss," continued the living fossil, pointing to the open-mouthed man who peeped in at the doorway.

"Oh, that is only my nurse," explained the squire, as the timid baby-tender popped away.

"Your nurse? He was once an old soldier," said Ammonite. "For this, I suppose we must blame the public parks. But why should you need a nurse?" he inquired.

"He is my child's nurse."



"Your child! - Are you married again?"

"Oh, dear, no," said Chowseltop. "My wife being dead I was compelled to get my child elsewhere——"

"Say no more," interrupted his lordship; turning sorrowfully away. Now that his wish was fulfilled, and he lived in futurity, he already began to feel more appreciation of the good old days when men were gentlemen, and ladies were ladylike. Perhaps, after all, his ambition had been vain; his dissatisfaction unwarrantable, and his worship of science a sin.

He brusquely refused Chowseltop's invitation to visit the nursery and inspect the proud parent's newly-made child.

We say "newly-made" advisedly, for the gray-haired infant was not born at all. It was manufactured or distilled by one of the most eminent firms that ever used for advertisement the words "Families supplied."

The only child of his marriage, Miss Charlie, being a go-ahead girl, had disappointed the old crank in his much-cherished notion to so mould a young mind that its tastes and feelings should accord with those of one thousand years ago. So he had ordered a baby, paid a good price, and got



a guarantee of a good article. But the guarantee was only for ten years. As yet no firm had discovered a means to prolong the life of their creations much beyond that period. Something always went wrong with the works. The materials would not stand the wear and tear. Many compounds of chemicals had been tried, new incubators invented, and the substituted life obtained from all kinds of animals. But they would never last more than a decade or so. Cats certainly supplied lives enough for nine infants, and an attempt had been made to make these cumulative and combine in one child. But the effort had failed. So, believing that he must make the most of his little girl, while he had her ; the worthy man daily sent her to Yapham, trusting the air of the ruins might expand her love for the antique.

Poor man ! He had not been lucky with the child. To begin with, he had ordered a son ; but, through some mistake of the counter-clerk, they had supplied him with a girl. Of course, having been made to sample, with his wife's hair and eyes, the little thing was unsaleable ; and not wishing to throw her on the hands of the firm, he was constrained to make the best of a bad job, and content



himself with a fifteen per cent. rebatement on the price.

Now, when this child was made for Chowsetop; his sister-in-law, unknown to him, had a finger in the pie. After various experiments she had discovered that the manufactured mortal lived just so long as the natural span of the animal life with which it was inoculated. For instance, if it be impregnated with the vital essence of a dog, the child might live from ten to fifteen years; if with that of a rabbit, two was the natural span. So the professor determined to act upon this principle; and, being consulting physician to the manufacturing firm, she bid them make a new departure in the life-supplying process. At first she thought to use the quintessence of an elephant, for elephants are extremely tenacious of life; but it was found several sizes too large, unless the life was split up over quite a number of cases. This would, of course, frustrate the object. Then a tortoise was considered; but, she argued, the tortoise was too slow; it only contrived to actually live a few years during its hundred or two. At last she struck upon a parrot, for they live quite a century. Thus, unknown to her father, Baby Chowsetop held the life-germ of that loquacious



bird. Hence her aptitude for repeating the works of Aristophanes, and her habit of scratching her head.

Chowseltop was naturally a little annoyed at Ammonite's refusal to see his baby girl, for she was still very dear to him, notwithstanding the fifteen per cent. rebatement.

However, to change the subject, he suggested breakfast.

Ammonite protested that he could eat no more, having taken a pair of soles; but the squire insisted that he should join the regular meal, like one of the family.

A bell being rung, there appeared a tray containing what seemed to be candies of various colors and shapes. Each selected a piece and leisurely sucked it.

When Ammonite saw that the breakfast was of so light a nature, he was tempted to try one of the bon-bons; and finding the flavor agreeable, he helped himself to another; and again, at Captain Charlie's invitation, to a third. Then Chowseltop stayed him, telling him he would burst. Sure enough, at this moment he did begin to feel uncomfortably full. His horror knew no bounds when Miss Coddle informed him that he had prac-



tically swallowed, first a couple of chops, a roll and coffee; then some ham and eggs, three slices of bread and a strong cup of tea; and finally a plate of devilled chicken, a sausage, a savory omelette, some marmalade, two crumpets, and a pint of new milk.

Poor man! He felt uncomfortable for the rest of the day.

After breakfast the villa was besieged by crowds of anxious inquirers of all classes. Curiosity-mongers wanted to see "It," and sent in offers of large sums to purchase the living Fossil. Impresarios wished to hire "It" for public exhibition. Savants wanted to set "It" up in their halls as an animated statue. Journalists clamored to interview "It," and not a few sensation-loving ladies forwarded to "It" formal offers of marriage. Such is notoriety.

To all of these were sent polite but firm refusals. Still, much to Ammonite's disgust, the assembled crowd could not be dispersed until he had shown himself on the balcony. It was then discovered that every individual—man, woman and child—aye, even infants in arms, had brought their amateur photographic apparatus with them.

"Tell us how it is that you come to be Lord



Ammonite," said Miss Charlie, as they all sat on the stoop, the ladies smoking cigarettes and the gentlemen chewing gum.

"I inherited the title; I am a peer by virtue of descent," proudly replied the ancient Briton.

"That's amazingly curious," said Molly Coddle. "Our noblemen are so by virtue of *ascent*."

"How so?" asked Ammonite.

Chowseltop explained thus: "When a man has sufficient means," said he, "and is ambitious for a handle to his name, he buys a title. I suppose, in your time, it was impossible to purchase a patent of nobility?"

"Oh dear, no. It was occasionally done," said Ammonite.

"But you have lost yours, have you not?" asked Charlie, secretly determined not to let the old man know the whereabouts of his property.

"Certainly not. My title lives or dies with me."

"But suppose I know of another, exactly similar?" argued the captain.

"It is a worthless counterfeit, like that suit of armor," said his lordship, pointing to one of Chowseltop's most valued pieces of antiquity. "It was probably made at Birmingham, if that place still



exists, buried for a while to give it the semblance of age, and afterwards sold as an antiquity."

Thoughts in which a certain old curiosity shop-keeper and the punching of heads were associated, floated through the gallant captain's brain. Of course a counterfeit title would have answered her purpose with simple Sally Stubbs just as well, had not the genuine Lord Ammonite suddenly become so famous. Now all pleasant prospects of deception were at an end.

In return for the curious insight into savage life which the fossil man's conversation afforded them, Miss Coddle was anxious to show him something of the new world in which he now lived. So it was arranged that the remainder of the day should be spent in a little trip abroad. A sort of picnic party, in fact. Therefore the latest issue of the *Hourly Telephone* was procured, and Ammonite was invited to select the route from the many excursions advertised on the front page. The good old man scanned column after column; and his excitement was intense as he thus gathered the marvellous strides which locomotive science had made since his time. This is what he read:

"PENINSULAR AND ORIENTAL AERIAL SER-



VICE. First Class Passenger Aerostatic Vessels, fitted with elegant dining-saloons, sleeping berths, reserved compartments for gentlemen and children, and smoking-rooms for ladies; start daily from the central depot, for the States of the Southern Cross, Egypt, the source of the Nile, Zambesia, the Cape, Mauritius, Australia, Japan, China and India. The circular journey accomplished in three days. This superb line of machines carries a case of compressed Italian air for each passenger's use when in fever districts, and are fitted with refrigerators for cooling the temperature of the tropics.

Passengers may break their journey at any point, by means of patent parachutes.

Billiard rooms and lawn-tennis courts on every vessel."

"THE PLACE TO SPEND A HAPPY DAY!!

*Great Western Republic*, by means of the *Atlantic Pneumatic Tube*. Cars leave the terminus every hour for all parts of the American Continent; arriving two hours earlier than their departure (in consequence of longitudinal difference).

First-class tickets include the use of air-tight boats for shooting the Falls and Rapids of Niagara; Sky-cycles for a scamper across the prairies; admis-



sion to the Mammoth Cave; and the ruins of the World's Fair at Chicago."

"INTERNATIONAL AERICAR COMPANY. Elegant Palace Cars are now flying in all directions throughout Utopia and the States of the Southern Cross, calling at all mainland stations, and at the Atlantic Islands when required.

*Heavy cars for baggage*, always on hand, to order.

*Aerial Freight Wagons*, and trading balloons can be chartered.

Houses removed without unpacking.

N. B.—A number of eligible sites to let for the summer months."

"THE GREAT CENTRI-MUNDANE SHAFT COMPANY.

*Quickest route to the Antipodes, through the Centre of the Earth.*

Twin Elevators leave the Capital towns of Utopia, and Australasia, simultaneously, every five hours.

The Saloons are well lighted, supplied with artificial air and thoroughly protected from the heat or sulphurous fumes of the fiery regions.

Now is the time to travel, when the *Volcanic Forces of the interior* are active, and present such



a stupendous scene of golden glory as baffles description.

Return Fares at reduced figures. Special arrangements made with Pleasure Parties."

"Travel by the New Method of ARRESTED MUNDANE ATTRACTION.

*Now ready.* A map and guide to the Ether Regions, taken from ordnance survey, clearly showing to all aerial travellers who use our patent apparatus for the annihilation of mundane influence, or the law of gravitation, the exact stopping place, and the time that will elapse before the revolving earth brings their particular destination immediately beneath them."

Lord Ammonite could read no more. His eyes grew dizzy. His brain was dazed. To the people of Utopia these methods of travelling were not at all extraordinary. Indeed many cried out loudly for reform; much as the people of ancient Britain had grumbled at their parliamentary slow trains. But to Ammonite they seemed like fairy tales.

Perhaps the railways and telegraphs, the cables and phonographs of his day would have affected his ancestors of one thousand years before in much the same manner.



He was utterly powerless to suggest a trip. He would like to have gone on each and all of these journeys at one and the same time. This, they told the silly old man, was impossible. He seemed much surprised. He said it was marvellous that such a word as "impossibility," should still exist.

At length it was settled that he should have a preliminary run round on an aericar; to get a general idea of the traffic which crowded the highway of the air.

Then a difficulty arose as to his costume. It was imperative that he travel incog. for his own comfort's sake. How to disguise him? In the first place, his whiskers must come off; but as razors were unknown, there was no means of shaving. After many objections, Molly Coddle clipped his lordship's beard quite close with a pair of scissors. She already began to take quite a motherly interest in the living result of her skill. Next the squire fixed him up with an old sky-cycling suit of his own; but the things were a bit too tight, and Ammonite couldn't get the buttons properly adjusted with his left hand. He so pathetically bemoaned the loss of his right, that at last the communicative Chowsestop revealed



the fact that it was lying, “ all alive and kicking ” as he said, in Miss Coddle’s laboratory on Mount Teneriffe.

Now, nothing would satisfy the late fossil, but the restoration of his hand. In vain did the professor point out that it was impossible to reunite it to the arm, unless she reduced both body and limb to their former state of stone ; and cemented them ; with a bar of iron run through each to give strength to the joint. Ammonite didn’t care. He wanted his hand, even loose as it was. So it was decided that they should go to Teneriffe and see what the hand had to say, or rather, write, on the subject.

Ten minutes later they all stood at the foot of the car depot, on the shores of the great inland sea ; ready to mount upwards, previous to embarking.



## CHAPTER VII.

### FLYING THROUGH SPACE.

THE North Mediterranean Central Aerocar Depot, like all others of its class, was built at an elevation of one thousand feet above the level of the surrounding land or sea. This was necessary, inasmuch as the huge flying machine, on starting, took a considerable dip before the colossal paddle-like wings gained sufficient ascendancy over the resisting air. The platform was reached by large numbers of elevators, in which were automatic booking-offices.

Professor Coddle, as chaperon of the party, put some small coins in a slot labelled "Mount Teneriffe," and obtained the necessary number of tickets for that place.

On gaining the platform, there were ten minutes to wait, before the car they required, "The Atlas," would be ready to start ; so that Ammonite had time to look around. Poor bewildered barbarian,



he stood utterly astounded. On all sides he heard stentorian voices crying out a babel of directions, such as,—

"This way for Rome, Vesuvius, Mount Etna, Cairo, Khartoom, Victoria Nyanza, Lake Tanganyika, and Zambesia."

"Now for Athens, Constantinople, Mount Ararat, Cabul, Himalaya Mountains, and Calcutta."

"Just starting for Mount Blanc, Berne, The Rhine, Riga and St. Petersburg."

"All aboard for Paris, Ancient Britain, Norway, Iceland, and the North Pole."

But, for the life of him, he could not see the individuals who had such abnormally strong lungs. Professor Coddle, however, explained that these voices proceeded from a number of trumpet-mouthed phonographs, which were manipulated by the time-clerk, in her little office overhead.

A wonderful bustling place, this Aericar depot. There were crowds of passengers rushing about, just in the same old cat-on-hot-tiles fashion that Ammonite had so often observed at the great railway termini of his former life. There was parting and greeting of friends, losing of hand-bags, buying of papers, asking of unending questions;



and a small sprinkling of loafing old ladies ogling the pretty young men.

But no porters. The uncivil, toe-trapping, shin-barking, tip-cadging, diabolical porter was a thing of the past. All information was conveyed to the anxious traveller by the phonographic trumpets above mentioned.

Ammonite had little time to examine and analyze the crowd of extraordinary beings who flocked to and fro; but the peculiarities which struck him most forcibly were the absence of hair on the faces; the extreme delicacy and diminutive size of the hands and feet; the very small mouths, furnished with tiny white teeth; the evident superiority and authority of the females over the males, and the well-to-do aspect of all. Not a solitary sample of impecuniosity or destitution did he see. And indeed the laboring or artisan classes were totally unrepresented. Every one seemed in affluent circumstances, whilst but few showed signs of being on business bent. All the world might have been bound for some great pleasure party.

This happy state of society was afterwards explained to the fossil by Miss Coddle and Squire



Chowseltop. In condensed form, their explanation was this —

By a simple application of the theory advancing the survival of the fittest, it would be seen that as humanity became more of brain-workers, and less of manual laborers, the mind would expand; and the hands, through centuries of inactivity, would contract. The same process would lessen the feet of a race who had developed powers to navigate the air; and with whom walking was a very rare occurrence. As regards the size of the mouth and teeth, it was obvious that a great gash and grinders would be superfluous to a race who rarely, if ever, ate in bulk. "Indeed," said Miss Coddle, "all the best babies are now made with mere button-hole mouths, and no teeth whatever." The absence of poverty, to any appreciable extent, was due to a provision of the legislature; which ensured to all Utopians, on arrival at maturity, a fixed allowance as a start-off in life. Thus the principle of perfect equality extended to all men and women, at the commencement of their career. After this they were left to their own resources; and, although some increased their patrimony whilst others failed to keep their share of the country's wealth, all had an equal chance. Accident of birth had no



significance. No poor need complain of the rich. They had all started on equal terms, and sank or swam entirely on their own merits. By this plan very few Utopians ever became destitute. Such as did so, through worthlessness or vice, were brought before the tribunals and punished. It need only be added that destitution was a capital crime; and the absence of beggars and paupers will be fully understood.

"All aboard for Barcelona, Madrid, Gibraltar, Madeira, Teneriffe, The Cape and Natal," blared a trumpet; and, taking Ammonite by the arm, Chowseletop led the fossil to the Atlas aericar.

An elegant caravan, of skeleton structure, fitted inside like an ancient Pullman drawing-room car, with seats upon the roof and sunshading awnings; capable of carrying fifty people with comfort. Such was the vehicle which greeted the nobleman's eyes. Moreover it stood on grooved wheels; and, but for the paddle-shaped propellers, two on either side, and the long train-like helm, which resembled the recumbent tail of a peacock; his lordship might have imagined himself bound on a journey in a veritable *chemin de fer du luxe*. But when he had mounted to the box-seat, the prospect was appalling to a naturally nervous man.



The line of rails extended to the end of the platform, and there abruptly ended. On passing that point, the whole machine would be precipitated into space, suggesting to the uninitiated mind an unpleasant crash and a big splash in the sea one thousand feet beneath.

Ammonite held his breath, and convulsively grasped the seat with his only available hand, when the car began to glide towards this awful precipice. Another moment and they had shot over the brink. They were sinking ; sinking with the sickening feeling of the first plunge down a switch-back railway. Ammonite gave himself up for lost. He tried to remember a prayer ; but a thousand years is a long while to look back into one's memory-box and rummage out things of that sort. He merely shut his eyes, and yelled in anticipation of the crash. But it didn't come. The diving sensation modulated ; then ceased altogether. So he stopped yelling and opened his eyes to behold the wing-like paddles gracefully revolving ; the steering tail expanded ; and the car soaring steadily over the rippling blue waters of the Mediterranean.

Not the slightest sense of motion, although they are travelling at the rate of something less than



one thousand miles an hour. The earth is slowly gliding beneath them, like a moving panorama, or series of dissolving views.

Looking backward, the snow-capped peaks of the Alps, aglow with the prismatic rays of the sun, form a gorgeous background to the fruitful plains of Southern France ; midst which the river Rhone winds and glistens like a serpent of gold. Beneath them, the sea, as a mirror with smooth, clear face, reflects the intense blue of the sky. Little patches of green on the left are the islands sacred to the Vendetta and to *sardines à-l'huile* ; whilst beyond these the eye can discern the ruins of that great temple of barbaric worship, St. Peter's at Rome. That puff of smoke in the distance marks the place where Vesuvius, with its colony of match factories, pollutes the azure sky. Before them the fair country of Espagna, with its groves of olive oil and orange marmalade ; its liquorice plantations, and its cantharides farms ; basks in the beatific noontide ; whilst beyond it the fragrant land of the Portugal onion smiles down on the Atlantic Ocean.

Above and around, the atmosphere is alive with craft of all sorts and descriptions.

Although scarcely the fashionable time for tak-



ing the air, there is a goodly sprinkling of private and family aerostats on the wing. Many are built in fantastic shapes, in the semblance of birds. The albatross and the swallow seem to be the most in vogue. Within these lounge on luxurious cushions, men, who claim to be society beauties. Some few saucy machines, built like bats, bear rakish young ladies, riding home in that tell-tale yesternight's evening dress, which they vainly strive to hide by turning coat collars up in the blazing mid-day sun. Others shaped like soap tablets, patent medicine bottles, mustard castors, and a host of eccentric devices, carry clerks to the offices of advertising firms; and here and there a tandem is driven by some dashing young lady on her way to an aerial polo match or race meeting. Again there are crowds of rapid transit cars careering in every direction. Those which they meet pass beneath, and such as overtake them go overhead; for it is a strict rule of the air that traffic proceeding northward shall take the lower station, and that going south, shall navigate the upper stratus. Freight wagons are not allowed at an elevation of more than two thousand feet; whilst the great lines of airships, such as those of the P. & O. service, whose stopping places are less frequent; take a higher altitude,



keeping well above the extent of the cloud line, for fear of collisions whilst enveloped in those nebulous nuisances.

Ammonite was particularly impressed with the fact that one man alone managed such a colossal machine as that in which he rode; but it was pointed out to him that so perfect was the mechanism that it was unnecessary to employ more.

"Then if manual labor is so useless nowadays, how on earth do the inhabitants of the world find employment?" he asked.

"Ninety per cent. of them do not try," replied the professor. "They enjoy themselves all their days, or devote their leisure to brain work."

"But who makes these machines?" asked Ammonite.

"They are made by machinery."

"And who makes the machinery to make them?"

"Machines again make that," said Miss Coddle. "Our social and scientific system, like that of Nature, is circumambient."

"But you surely have sons of toil to cultivate the land," suggested Ammonite.

"All done by machinery."

"And that machinery is also made, of course

—"



"By machinery, yes."

His lordship sat back, perfectly beaten, but still unconvinced. It was difficult for a man with a nineteenth-century mind to understand her. Not only capital, but also labor had been totally abolished.

Now Barcelona was reached. A pretty little colony of nomadic villas, carried here from fashionable towns for a few summer months of *dolce far niente* ; much as in Ammonite's time society people would go to their house-boats, the seaside, or the continent for change of air ; only in Utopia the pleasure-seekers, like snails, carried their homes with them wherever they went.

Here an accident happened which might have cost Ammonite that life which Molly Coddle had so considerately restored to the blundering old gentleman.

With the intention of stretching his legs, he had descended to the platform, and there, being anxious to buy himself a newspaper, he had inserted a silver coin in the *Old York Herald* slot ; but could not get his change.

In vain did Mr. Chowsestop explain that the machines did not give change. Ammonite said they ought to. In a country like that, where every-



thing could be done by machinery, it was simply outrageous that a mean little newspaper automaton should refuse to give change. He shook the delivery slab and shouted up the slot; meantime the phonograph was loudly crying out that the car was now starting.

At last the squire began to run; then his lordship, in real alarm, trotted after him. Ned caught the car as it started, and deftly jumped aboard; but Ammonite, forgetting for the moment his missing right hand, tried to grasp the back rail with his stump; and, of course failing, fell plump on the aerial monster's tail.

Away it slid off the rails, and again took that horrible dive before steadying. Ammonite clung like grim death to the gradually expanding tail. In this way, more dead than alive, he travelled right across the Iberian Mountains, the entire party on the 'bus telling him to keep still and he would be quite safe. Poor man! no need to tell him not to move—he could not; he was paralyzed with fright. O'er the fair fields of Spain sped the flying machine; but their beauties were all lost on the wretched Lord Ammonite. He was momentarily expecting to enter those same fields in a sudden and abrupt manner.



In moments of real danger, what trivial things will occupy the attention and divert the thoughts! Ammonite found himself mechanically counting the plumes in this tail-like aericar rudder. He noticed that he lay on the third from the left; but it was the seventh from the right. At the same time he was wondering, in an aimless sort of way, whether he should drop on his back, or his hands and knees. And he hoped the grass might not be damp where he fell; he was always subject to influenza.

Then he awoke to a livelier sense of horror. The great shafts of the steering gear were gradually but surely slanting downwards. The tail was drooping.

He clung tighter with his one hand. No use; he was sliding, sliding away to the end. He lost his hold—a yell, and he slid off.

They gathered him from the rail-track of the Madrid station, already half a corpse. It was only after the application of two brandy balls that he was induced to continue his journey.

After leaving Gibraltar, where Ammonite much admired the elegant suspension bridge across the straits, they sped over the Atlantic. Here the absence of ships was remarked. Miss Coddle



pointed out that, except as mere toys, they were now of no use, since all trading was done through the air, or by means of tubes under the bed of the oceans. Indeed, those great volumes of water were so useless that schemes were afloat to clear off the whole by evaporation ; and make use of the beds for public parks and play-grounds for children. It really seemed ridiculous to permit such immense tracts of country to be inundated with enormous accumulations of combined oxygen and hydrogen, when, by simply separating the gases and disseminating them about the ether regions, they might be of real value ; whilst the site of their ancient occupation might be sold for building lots and other useful purposes.

On reaching the island of Madeira, that little patch of fertile soil which Professor Coddle opined would come in handy as an oasis when the ocean beds had been transformed into dry, sandy deserts ; half an hour's pause was made for luncheon or refreshments. Ammonite was not hungry ; his fairly large but still limited capacity had been stretched to the utmost by the succession of breakfasts which he had swallowed. So, while the others partook of food, he toddled off alone for a little stroll.

Civilization is of slow growth in isolated lands,



and Ammonite's delight was boundless when he came across a veritable hackney carriage. True, it was drawn by bullocks, and in place of wheels had sleigh-like bearings; but this, the fossil knew, was exactly as public conveyances had been in Madeira one thousand years ago. It did him good to see such conservatism; and he could not resist the temptation to enter and drive through the little town of Funchal. Away trotted the bovine pair; and, although the vehicle joggled rather unpleasantly to a man who had breakfasted so heartily, still the old fossil thoroughly enjoyed it.

Not being familiar with semi-tropical foliage, the magnolia trees in full bloom, the cacti, the moon-lilies, and the various palms were a source of great surprise and joy to him. He felt thankful that some corner of the earth had escaped the scientific revolution, and still retained its pristine beauty. The peaceful surroundings carried his weary mind backwards.

He thought of his own snug country seat in beauteous Devonshire; of Chowseptop Hall with its sturdy old oaks, its cawing rooks and its majestic wolds; of the tranquil summer skies, unbroken save by some fleecy cloud, where no aerial machines



rushed on their maddening career. He thought of that sweet placid time when Nature was the gentle ruling power, and science was subservient to her. That happy era before everything, including machines, was made by machinery; and he almost wished that some good, kind, ministering Molly Coddle of the olden times might mix him a hot and strong sleeping cup, and say him sweet "good-night." That he might wake no more upon the Utopian land where science has overleaped itself; and decent folk were compelled to shave their whiskers, or thought quite capable of bearing a concealed tail.

Ammonite might have gone on for hours, perfectly happy in his ancient habit of growling at all things that were, had he not been fearful lest he might again miss the aericar. So he told the driver to turn round. That stolid lady affected not to hear. He touched her elbow and yelled in her ear. She produced a slate and pencil. Clearly Ammonite had struck a deaf mute. But what was he to do without his hand? He could not write with his left; and the oxen still kept on their way, as if intent on crossing the island.

His lordship was in a great state of alarm; when he saw suspended above his head, a basket



which dangled from the flooring of the aericar. Time having expired, they had started ; making a short inland tour, however, to pick him up if possible with the apparatus used for gathering passengers at other than their stopping stations. The fossil man was rapidly losing all sense of fear, so he promptly scrambled into the basket and was hauled aboard.

When he explained the cause of his non-return, Chowseletop said there was a law compelling all drivers of public carriages to be deaf and dumb. This was passed to prevent the pollution of the atmosphere by the bushels of bad language and sacks of swearing which were flung about at every street corner. The air of Madeira was considerably purer than it would have been had Ammonite's driver had the power of speech ; for the absent-minded old gentleman forgot to pay his fare.

Nothing of importance broke the journey between Madeira and the Canary Islands, except the pleasing sight of a regiment of Skycycle Lancers of the Southern Cross returning from their drill on the Sahara to their quarters in the Azores. Captain Charlie surveyed them critically. They were a portion of the enemy's army, against which



to-morrow's great battle was to be fought. On passing the Utopian officer, the entire regiment simultaneously saluted, after the usual manner of greeting an enemy, namely; by placing their dexter thumb in contiguity with the nasal organ and spreading their fingers out. It was an imposing spectacle.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## A MODERN MIRACLE FACTORY.

TENERIFFE at last. Here the party alighted. The professor's observatory, dwelling-house and laboratory was erected near the summit, at an altitude of fully eleven thousand feet ; and considerably above the snow-level. She had selected this somewhat secluded spot for the sake of quietness. It was very rarely that street bands and kindred nuisances disturbed her studies at this exalted place.

Of unpretentious exterior, the professor's domicile calls for no special comment until we reach the work-shop. That hot-bed of advanced scientific achievements.

Arrived at a heavy door of solid steel, several feet thick, Miss Coddle caused her electric orchestra in the anteroom to bellow forth its loudest music ; and thus effectually to deafen the party while she whispered some mysterious pass-word in a telephone receiver close by the door. No one



knew this pass-word but herself and her faithful janitor within.

"But suppose you were to die," Ammonite ventured to suggest.

"My secrets will die with me," said the lady.

"And the janitor?" inquired his lordship.

"He must die with them," said Molly Coddle, with a shrug of the shoulders.

At this moment the massive door descended; its upper surface making a platform upon which they stepped, and entered the Modern Miracle Factory.

Facing them stood the janitor. A fine muscular specimen of the now entirely extinct Zulu Kaffir race. He was dressed in the native costume of his pre-earthquakian ancestors; which consisted of a feather mouchee, a beaded girdle around the waist, necklet of beads and lion's claws, a snuff-box and spoon through his ears, and bangles of brass around the ankles and arms. That is all. After the manner of his forefathers, he carried an ox-hide shield, a couple of throwing assegais, and a knob-kerrie. This formidable looking person held the proud distinction of being the only black man living in the Utopian era.

In the choosing of a janitor, the professor



had hit upon the ancient Zulu as at once the most faithful, moral and reliable specimen of unsophisticated humanity which the world has ever produced. So the clever lady had selected a weak-minded, thick-lipped man of her own race ; and, by chemical processes, had gradually eliminated all the handiwork of successive centuries in civilization and evolution, until she had reduced the wretched creature to his original elementary form.

It had been a most interesting experiment. The chameleon-like changes which the subject had undergone, during his gradual metamorphosis from a white man to a nigger, had afforded her much amusement. The retrogression of the reasoning powers until they became mere instinct, the reformation of the features, the thickening and the curling of the wool, and the spreading of the nose had formed a succession of curious sights. The gradual loss of the Utopian language, and acquisition of his native tongue, which the professor, with her ready wit, contrived to learn, was most entertaining. When the transformation was complete and the Zulu had clothed himself after his kind, Miss Coddle had a more trustworthy custodian of her sanctuary than the neoteric world of smart humanity could afford.



"Sacco-bona, baas," said the Zulu, saluting in his native language. "W nga vimbi mnyango, Bob," replied Molly; and the creature moved away in accordance with her command. "Bob" was short for the Zulu's adopted name, "Bobinsizwa-hidulo-igwa-uboco," which, literally translated, means "Young-man-with-the-once-white-face."

When the fright "Bob" gave Lord Ammonite had subsided, and he looked around, this is what he beheld.

A long lofty room, with movable glass roof, towards which monster telescopes and other astronomical instruments raised their grotesque forms. Around the walls a much stained experimentalizing bench, crowded with every conceivable form of retorts, batteries, gas bags, microscopes, metaphysical test-tubes, and metempsychosical machines. Above these, shelves, literally packed with chemical bottles. In a corner was a sort of menagerie of animals and birds awaiting vivisection; or destined to supply various parts of their anatomy for others' use; even perchance to lend their life to the vivification of some long dead body. The vital essence of quite a number such as these had been boiled down to make that same elixir



vitæ which now animated the astonished Ammonite.

In another cage, a snake-like thing lay coiled up; and his lordship felt no small disgust when Miss Coddle said: "Allow me to introduce you to one of your ancestors. These headless worms, which are now found only in a fossil state, were the first to bear the honored name of Ammonite."

She roused the reptile with a stick; and, unwinding its slimy length, the mutilated mollusc poked the place where its face should have been between the bars.

"It thinks it's feeding time," said the professor. Then shouting "Viga-Lapa, Bob;" she instructed that burly black to bring a decoction of snails and slugs, which the headless snake sucked up, until its bulk was more than doubled.

Soon after this, the fossil man, with his aptitude for getting into trouble and making blunders, committed an act which made the worthy old lady exceedingly annoyed.

While the rest of the party were inspecting her recently invented lithoscope, by means of which one might see clearly through a stone wall; the curious old gentleman ventured to lift the lid of a little box, like an ancient cracker casket, and to



peep within. To all appearances the thing was empty, except that there escaped therefrom a strong scent of ether, and something sounding like a sigh. This caught Miss Coddle's sharp ear. When she saw what was done, her anger and anxiety knew no bounds. The weather being warm, even at this altitude, the sliding roof had been removed; and her first care was to have this closed immediately.

"What have I done?" said Ammonite.

"What have you done? Why, that box contained the ethereal essence of a revolutionary anarchist. He plotted to blow the earth out of space by the introduction of a powerful explosive to the interior fires, by means of the 'Centri-Mundane Shaft.' He was sentenced to death; but I saved his life. Now you have let it loose. It has evaporated. True, this inflammatory spirit cannot do much harm, without a body; but if it has escaped through the roof, it will go careering around the globe, throughout eternity, seeking a resting-place."

"A terrible fate," said Edward Chowseletop: "but nothing is too bad for such a fiendish soul. It was not you, my friend," he continued, turning to Lord Ammonite, "it was the hand of Justice that sent him on his long journey."

"But it was my hand," cried his lordship.



"My left hand; and that reminds me, I would be very much obliged if you would let me have my right."

"Oh! yes. Your hand. Certainly. I'd forgotten the real object of our visit," apologized the professor. "I left it on the bench," she said; and she went to get it. But it was not there. She looked all around for it. It was nowhere to be seen. Everybody searched in vain. All but "Bob." That savage squatted on his haunches in a corner, happily doing nothing, after the habit of his race.

At length a horrible suspicion crossed the professor's mind.

She had been away from home two whole days, and had neglected to leave Bob's "scoff" or food.

"Bob, have you got that hand which I left upon the bench?" said she, in the Zulu language.

"Ya, baas," said the Kaffir. "Bob's scoff. Lungeli. Inka!" and he raised an assegai above his head in token of thanks; then pointed to his huge mouth, and rubbed his stomach with a gluttonous grin of appreciation.

Ammonite, although quite unable to understand Bob's words, could not fail to understand his expressive pantomime.



"Great heavens! The brute has eaten my hand!" he cried, and he set up a piteous howl of agony and despair.

Chowseltop said that the worst of it was that these savages devoured the bones and all, so that it would be impossible to graft artificial flesh on it, and build it up somehow.

Lectern thought that Bob ought to be severely punished for his cannibalistic act; and Charlie remarked that he undoubtedly would be. His Nemesis would take the form of indigestion.

It was fortunate for Ammonite that Zulus never eat before sundown. Then they eat in bulk. Very much bulk, too.

Last evening Bob had gone supperless to rest. In the morning, seeing the useless piece of flesh laid out, he thought his considerate mistress had put it there for his refreshment. He had therefore carried it to his corner and buried it in mud (a quantity of which was kept in stock for his especial delectation), intending to bake it after the fashion of his people. When he pointed to his mouth, he was indulging in anticipative, and not appreciative pantomime.

Miss Coddle made Bob unearth and wash the



fossil's missing member; then she passed it to the luckless Ammonite.

Grasping his lordship's left digits, the truant hand gave them a warm and hearty grip, then shook them long and lovingly. It was quite an affecting scene; these two tried and trusty old friends, thus meeting, after so strange and such an eventful parting. Ammonite himself was visibly moved, and shed a few tears of unaffected sympathy. He never had a moment's doubt of the hand being his veritable own. He knew it by the mole at the back of the thumb, and the contracted little finger joint that could not be straightened. How often had he bit those finger-nails; a habit he had when studying. How often had it blown his nose; and a flood of recollections so overcame the good old man that he pressed it to his lips. The first record of a gentleman kissing his hand without so much as a thought of throwing the kiss to a lady.

Ammonite now put in a formal claim to the amputated limb as his sole and exclusive property; but the professor was loath to part with so valuable a curiosity. His lordship felt that much consideration was due to the lady, as the authoress of both their present existences; but he wanted his hand



badly. So, at last, it was agreed to leave it to the severed member itself. Paper and pencil were procured, and the hand wrote these words: "I should like to go with my body, if it's all the same to you." Ammonite was much touched by this exhibition of faithful affection, and without another word put his hand in his pocket.

"Bob" looked much disappointed to see his supposed "scoff" thus bestowed; but having had double allowance of his dearly-loved mealies served out, he contentedly set about making his native "pap."

The whole party went out, and the massive door slid into its place, leaving the Zulu alone with the horrible wonders of Professor Coddle's Laboratory of Modern Science.

The return journey to Chowseltop's villa was uneventful. The same scenes, save that as darkness closed around, the aerial machines lit up their electric lights of various colors, making the sky seem alive with a magnificent display of meteors.

Soon after dinner, at which Lord Ammonite selected his own bon-bons and his pastiles with much inquiring care; thoroughly worn out with the wonderful events of this, his first day in Utopia, his lordly fossilship retired to rest. Chowseltop



promised to wake him betimes in the morning, that they might fly over to the Great Sahara and view the pitched battle which was there to be fought between the entire armies of Utopia and the full military strength of the States of the Southern Cross. The moment he had laid his head down Ammonite fell asleep, with his rescued right hand underneath his pillow.



## CHAPTER IX.

### THE BATTLE OF NEW ROCK ISLAND.

LORD AMMONITE did not dream. Fantastic visions of the sleeping brain were entirely unheard of in Utopia. Everyday facts were of so weird and wild a nature that there was no scope for somnoric imaginative fiction in this land of wonders. Neither did his lordship sleep long, for at the break of day a stentorian rooster in the squire's stable-yard, crowed "five o'clock" so loudly and so persistently that he waked up a whole crowd of cocks in the neighborhood, and quite a noisy argument ensued. A deep bass, heavy-voiced fowl some distance off, replied by crowing "ten minutes to five," thus intimating that Chowseltop's rooster was considerably in advance of time, and his proclamation of the dawn was immature. Then an assertive little bantam trumpeted forth his opinion on the time of day, with an air of great authority; fixing it at two minutes and twenty-four seconds



to the hour of five. But the original rooster held his ground and stuck to it so long and persistently that presently they were all in one accord. "Five-o'clock-a-doodle-do!" echoed far and wide, broken only by the argumentative, straw-splitting little bantam; who now crew "Seven and a half minutes past five o'clock, and I don't care a doodle-do for you!"

For an hour his lordship lay a-bed, listening to the lark at Heaven's gate, carolling its scales; the common practice of trained vocalists in the early morning. At six o'clock the noisy fowls commenced anew their arguments. It seemed a great pity to Ammonite that these heralds of the day could not be regulated and set to one uniform time. But he supposed the old spirit of defiance had never been thoroughly eradicated from these self-opinionated birds.

Soon after this the restless fossil heard the well-remembered cry of another equally obstinate beast. It came from the direction of the stables, and was so natural, so redolent of the good old times; no new-fangled interpolations interfered with the hearty, old-established hideousness of its braying, and Ammonite felt moved by the familiar sound.

At seven o'clock Edward Chowseltop arrived,



and Ammonite, scouting the suggestion of a bath, made his toilet and followed him to the salon. According to the programme for the day they were to witness the great fight, which was fixed for twelve o'clock; to dine upon the battle-field, and in the evening to visit the theatre where "The Great Sammy Lectern," was going to perform. All the party had their own aerostats for the journey to the Sahara, and Chowsestop offered to give Ammonite a mount. In vain for that timid nobleman to protest that he was no flyer! The squire assured him that he had an old crock that a child could ride; and carried him away, before breakfast, to the stables to inspect the stud in general, and this machine in particular. Miss Freddy Bowman, the squire's groom, expatiated happily upon the beauties of the various aerostats and sky-cycles, instructing Ammonite to a certain extent in the art of guiding and managing the curious contrivance he was to mount. All that his lordship gathered, however, was that he had only to sit firm and let it have its head; to press gently either with the right or the left foot, according to the direction in which he wanted to go; that the handle on the left hand regulated the ascending power, and that the break or stopping



apparatus was on the right. This seemed simple enough. The only difficulty was to remember it. After half an hour's repetition the fossil thought he had got it into his head.

At breakfast the usual house-party, and "The Great Sammy Lectern," who happened to pop in about this time, took great interest in Ammonite's performance upon a beefsteak and a couple of boiled eggs; and watched him so closely that the poor old man became nervous. Getting a crumb the wrong way, and trying to take a drink of boiling hot coffee to wash it down, he coughed and spluttered; and—well it was a most trying position for a prim old man to be placed in. However, fortunately, Chowseletop had another sky-cycling suit; and after a change, Ammonite was once more fit to be seen.

Previous to their departure to the battlefield, Chowseletop wished to visit his baby-girl in the nursery, and invited Ammonite to accompany him.

"Polly, this is Lord Ammonite," said Chowseletop, by way of introduction.

"Oh! there's a bald-headed old fossil. Kiss Polly! Pretty Poll!" said the precocious parrot-like infant; and commenced making a series of loud



noises with her mouth in imitation of cracking nuts. His lordship waited to hear no more. He had been insulted all round, and was beginning to feel really annoyed with the people of Utopia. He had been divested of his hand, which had nearly been devoured by a savage Zulu; he had been shorn of his whiskers, called the descendant of a headless snake, and accused of having a tail; but to be called a bald-headed old fossil by a brat of six months old was more than he could stand. He strode majestically to his room and locked himself in.

It was only on a deputation of the whole household bringing a written apology from the imp, properly signed and witnessed; that he could be tempted to join the battle-party and be jolly.

The aerostats were brought around to the front of the house, and they mounted. Ammonite of course got on his from the wrong side, which landed him backwards way, with his face towards the tail. Luckily Freddy Bowman had hold of the machine's head, or his lordship might have gone careering through the sky in that ridiculous position. At last they started fair, and the erstwhile fossil found the sensation not unpleasant whilst the steering much less difficult than he had



imagined. As they sped across the sea at a comfortable pace, he gained considerable confidence, and even proposed to race Ned Chowseletop from the Balearic Islands to Algiers ; if he would give him fifty miles' start, and the upper station where the fair wind was stronger.

Poor easy-going man ! It was all plain sailing now, and he remembered his instructions perfectly : "Steer with the feet ; ascend or descend by turning handle with the left hand, and for stopping put the break on *with the right*." The one little thing he had forgotten was his right hand. He had left it in his other coat pocket, when he changed his clothes.

The great battle of New Rock Island will long be remembered as one of the most stubbornly contested military demonstrations in the history of the world. The political imbroglio which led to this great action may be briefly summarized thus :—For centuries since the great universal earthquake aerial navigators had been perpetually discovering new territory in the shape of lava islands and barren rocks in various parts of the great oceans. These had very properly been considered to belong to that one of the three great powers to whose mainlands they were contiguous. But quite



recently a rock, fully fifty feet in circumference and five feet above the water at high tide, had been found in the Eastern North Atlantic Ocean. The Great Western Republic, being all the continent of America north of the Panama Canal had clearly no claim; but the new-found prize was so nicely situated that some navigators placed it nearer Utopia, which embraced Europe and Asia; whilst others favored the United States of the Southern Cross, whose possessions consisted of Africa, South America, and Australasia. All efforts at arbitration had failed. Even it had not been found feasible to divide the bone of contention into two parts, each with a separate governor and staff. The accommodation was not sufficient; so there was nothing else for it but to fight it out.

On nearing the Sahara the vast armies could be seen; that of Utopia stretched in faultless array of columns and squares along the entire northern extent of the great desert; whilst, facing it, at the southern extremity, were the amassed military millions of the States of the Southern Cross. Richly caparisoned generals could be seen flitting up and down the columns, in their decorated aerostats, giving final orders, or cheering and rallying the women beneath their command. On



an oasis, midway between the opposing hosts, the combined bands of both countries discoursed most eloquent martial music. Portable refreshment saloons were conveniently dotted about, and the whole ground was surrounded by a merry throng of holiday-makers, and sight-seeing people of both nations. Ammonite could scarcely realize that an important and decisive battle was about to be fought between the leviathan armies of two of the most powerful countries of the world.

The site chosen for the Chowseltop party; reserved *fauteuilles* for which the worthy squire had paid a pretty stiff price; was immediately behind the forces of Utopia, midway between the right and left flanks. Plenty of stabling accommodation had been erected both for the machines of spectators and also those of the rank and file of the "infantry," for the bulk of the soldiers fought on foot; although such corps as "The Flying 45th" and the various regiments of "Sky-cycle Lancers" of course were suitably mounted. Chowseltop pointed out the stabling set apart for their use, in the vicinity of the reserved seats, and towards these the little party steered. But when they settled down a little and the time arrived to apply the brake, Ammonite became aware that to per-



form this operation he must of necessity use his right hand. And he hadn't got it. He felt in all his pockets. He even looked in his hat. It was nowhere to be found. What could have become of it? He must have dropped it in the waters of the Mediterranean, and it had only escaped the jaws of Zulu "Bob" to become food for fishes. In his excitement he forgot all about his having changed his clothes.

"Stop!" cried Chowseltop, as his lordship shot past the stables and over the heads of the rear ranks of the Utopian army at an elevation of ten or a dozen feet.

"I can't. I wish I could," yelled Ammonite.

"Turn round!" shouted Professor Molly Coddle.

But by this time the runaway aerostat had carried its frantic rider beyond the reach of his friends' voices. Away he sped, each moment coming nearer the earth, so that the wings of his machine threatened to play havoc with the head-gear of the Utopian soldiers. They called on him to take a higher altitude; but the bewildered and dazed old man forgot all about the handle on his left, in his fruitless endeavors to get hold of that on his right with his only available hand. At length he



cleared the lines; upsetting the commander-in-chief and several of his staff who were taking observations in the van, and made straight across the open desert for the oasis whereon the bands were playing. Several aides-de-camp and adjutants started in pursuit of him. The crowd laughed and yelled and hooted. It was like a dog chased by policemen on the course at a race-meeting.

Ammonite's aerostat seemed thoroughly wound up, and, like a living thing flying for life, it gained speed on being hard-pressed. The band lay directly in its course. "Would the musicians stop it?" cried every one. Not a bit. It stopped the musicians, though. It cut clean through them, scattering their instruments in all directions, whilst one great trumpet-mouthed affair got wedged on Ammonite's head, most effectually blinding and nearly suffocating him.

Away again across the open plain, by this time close down on the ground, progressing with a series of gigantic hops; battering the sand with its great flashing wings, and raising clouds of dust which almost hid from view the demon aerostat itself and effectually baffled its pursuers. Charging right into the formidable front of the enemy's army, it held on its mad career. With his head



firmly imbedded in the trumpet, Ammonite saw nothing, knew nothing. He only gave himself up for lost. Crash! Into the ranks of those faithful defenders of the States of the Southern Cross. Mowing them down on all sides with its flapping wings, like flowers beneath the scythe of some mighty reaper. Right through that staunch unflinching army did the ancient Briton force his way, leaving behind him a sprawling trail of picked women warriors, lying *hors de combat*. As they were all of the female persuasion, we are glad to say that none were hurt; for the wings of the vagrant aerostat were of exceedingly soft and light material, in addition to which all the soldiers had bendable bones and unbruisable flesh.

At length, with one last convulsive flap, the mighty machine collapsed, and left Lord Ammonite on his back in pitiable plight: scared to death, sore all over, and still with his head firmly wedged into the mouth of a big bassoon. In his struggles he had fortunately touched a tap which turned its motive power on at full force, and thus happily the flying capabilities of the machine were rapidly exhausted. Otherwise the poor old fellow might have gone on for a week or more.

It was an eight-days' aerostat.



For some time the hapless nobleman lay dazed ; then with his returning senses he heard the murmuring of voices, which became resonant almost to a roar as they filtered through the curly brass instrument and reached his ears. He could distinguish no words. Only a sonorous, reverberating blur. At length a howling whirlwind like double-distilled thunder came tearing through the bassoon with such terrific force that it blew his head clean out. Then he knew that a hardened old trooper had shouted a few of his choicest oaths in at the mouth-piece, and thus effected his release.

Of course Miss Molly, who had travelled in pursuit, up in a higher level, came quickly to the spot, and bore him back upon her aerostat, much as she had done when he had fainted on the day of his restoration. This, however, not until the old gentleman had been compelled to leave his name and address in case of an action for damages being brought. These he gave as Lord Ammonite of Ammonite, Devonshire, Great Britain. Needless to say that if they sought they would find neither the place nor him.

When the party were at last comfortably seated in their stalls the battle had just begun.

"Will there be much slaughter?" inquired his



lordship ; " for my nerves are a little unstrung, and I'm afraid the sight of blood might make me ill."

"Slaughter! Nonsense!" said the professor. "Our soldiers are most careful not to hurt each other. Victories are won with us by moving our regiments and battalions in squares or columns much in the manner that our ancestors played the ancient game of chess; except that the moves are amplified and so arranged that every individual party to the fight, from commander-in-chief to common soldier, has at her discretion a certain amount of independent action. Thus a clever private or "pawn," so to speak, may press forward and become a "piece" or officer. In this way promotion from the ranks obtains.

"I think it awful rot, the way we play the game of war," said the chivalrous Chowseltop. "In the dark ages, before the great earthquake, nations used to fight their battles in reality. Did they not, Lord Ammonite? Not merely move about and finesse according to strategical science, as we do?"

"That was unfortunately so," replied Lord Ammonite.

"They carried weapons to kill each other, did they?" eagerly inquired the squire.

"That was in the barbarous times when the



male population ruled the world," interrupted Miss Molly Coddle. "We cannot expect our lady warriors to do as men did then. It would not be ladylike."

"I don't see," objected Edward Chowseltop, "what need there is for a soldier to be extra ladylike."

Such a revolutionary sentiment made Miss Coddle shudder. From time immemorial an officer and a lady had been recognized synonyms.

"If I had lived a thousand years ago, I would have been a soldier," continued the enthusiastic admirer of the past. "It must have been glorious sport to go out with a gun and sword and kill people."

"You forget," said Ammonite, "the killing was not all on one side. You might have got killed yourself."

"Yes, of course that was a drawback," admitted the squire.

"In those days the issue depended entirely on excess of numbers and physical strength," remarked the professor; "qualities for which our advanced ideas have no respect. Our military manoeuvres are governed alone by science and by skill."



"Then you have no deadly weapons? No rifles, guns, or cannon?" inquired Lord Ammonite.

"Yes, indeed," replied the lady; "we have brought the art of gunnery to a great state of perfection."

"You have smokeless and noiseless powder, I suppose," suggested his lordship.

"We use no powder. With our magazine rifles charged with electricity, a fairly skilful marksman, using the telescopic sight, will pierce an iron plate or crack an egg without breaking the yolk, at a distance of five miles. Of course for these exhibitions the force must be nicely regulated by means of the 'Vernier' gauge."

"We have also got guns which will shoot around corners as required," added the squire.

"Yes," said Molly, "but unfortunately they give all our girls a cast in the eye, so they are not much used."

All this time the field of battle had been undergoing kaleidoscope-like changes. There had been marching and counter-marching. The conflicting sides had met. Many pieces had been removed as captured, whilst others penetrated far into the broken ranks of their enemies. The situation was a most complicated one, and just as the Southern



Cross seemed to be building up a strong position on the right, the commander-in-chief of the Utopian army cried "check!" and all attention was drawn to the extreme left corner. The fortunate "piece" which thus rose to such enviable prominence was Captain Charlie Chowsetop of "The Flying 45th," who, whilst being flanked and protected by a trusty "pawn" in the person of Private Jacky Smart, commanded the square on which stood the Chief of the United States of the Southern Cross.

The delight of the little party in the reserved stalls knew no bounds, for with their powerful field-glasses they had followed the captain's movements from the first, and could easily grasp the situation, although the heroine was fully two hundred miles away. Whilst congratulating each other on their young soldier's success, in an undertone, for they did not wish to attract attention or appear conspicuous, what was their surprise to hear, from the back seats where the poorer people sat, a man's voice excitedly exclaiming: "Bravo! That's my Charlie who has got their chief in check. She's my very own Captain Charlie. Three cheers for Charlie Chowsetop. Three cheers for my young woman!"



Miss Molly and her brother-in-law looked at each other in alarm. Ammonite turned round, and there, standing on a seat, with his long hair flying in the breeze, waving a pocket-handkerchief in one hand and a paint brush in the other, he beheld his pet aversion of one thousand years ago, Salvator Rosa Stubbs. His surprise was infinite. But there were also other surprises in store for both him and the rest of the little party. At this moment another man, carried away by the excitement of the moment, rose and exclaimed: "And that plucky little 'pawn' that's protecting him, is my sweetheart, Jacky Smart. Three cheers for Jacky Smart." Amidst the tremendous hurrahing which ensued, Simple Sally Stubbs was publicly embraced by his brother in good fortune. When the cheering had subsided, the fossil man, who took much interest in the pair of love-sick men, heard with amazement these words pass privately between them: "What's your name, dear?" "My name is McFuss, love, what is yours?" "I am Lord Ammonite!"

Charlie's move was a decisive one. The chief was taken out of check, but operations on the other flank harassed him. Meantime the attack upon the Utopian right was abandoned, and forces



withdrawn, but to no avail. At the 275th move "checkmate" was cried; and the referees gave their unqualified decision in favor of the army of Utopia.

Then such a bustle ensued. The ground had to be cleared and completely covered with spacious marquees; for it was usual, after a battle, for the entire armies on both sides to dine together on the ground, and afterwards to spend the evening in harmony and conviviality. Now, although Charlie would undoubtedly be one of the principal heroines of the evening, the Chowseltop party in view of Ammonite's escapade, decided not to stay, and lost no time in getting on their homeward journey. They knew that later the air would be inconveniently crowded. So his lordship was again hoisted into the professor's aerostat, his own exhausted machine being left behind in charge of Freddy Bowman, and the return ride was accomplished in comfort and in safety. "Thanks to Molly Coddle," thought Ammonite. It was astonishing how kind and how considerate she was to the ancient nobleman. His lordship was getting quite to like the scientific lady. When she assisted him to alight, he felt a sensation thrill up his arm, just as if she had gently pressed his hand. And he believed she



would have done so, had he not left it in his other coat-pocket behind his bedroom door. Here at last was an already moulded mind; a ready-made, ideal woman. Ha! That's how the cat jumps, is it? Well! Well! Happy Ammonite!



facturer's work, she has again become the mere raw materials."

"Pretty Poll! Pretty Poll! Polly's a devil!" said the parrot, with a cunning twinkle in her tiny eyes; and she voraciously set about devouring the starch and the other component parts of Baby Chowseletop's disintegrated constitution. There is no doubt that the irrepressible bird would in a very short time have buried that child by stowing the entire remains in its own interior; had it not been stopped and caged. Probably it might have spared the phosphorus, which had gone to form the colossal brain of the youngster. Parrots don't go in for much of that class of article. The squire was very much cut up. It was a sad spectacle, the sight of that stricken old man's sorrow, as they swept the scraps of his dear one from the floor; and, when all was cleared away, he lingered still; his eyes fixed upon a grease-stain. It was all that was left of his too early lost one. At length they led him silently away. He never spoke but once before he had his dinner. Then he softly murmured, "Take that damned parrot back to the manufacturer's store and ask what they allow for returned empties."

Of course, in consequence of this domestic afflic-



tion, all thoughts of the theatre that night had to be abandoned; and Ammonite felt quite a little fluttering at his heart, and a sense of desolation when Molly Coddle bade him good-night, and flew off in the direction of her own establishment on Mount Teneriffe. He sighed, and felt that the time would seem long ere her arrival on the morrow. Then he sat himself listlessly upon a chair within the "patio;" and picking up an evening newspaper glanced over it. Columns of detailed reports of the great battle of New Rock Island, by eye-witnesses from divers points of view, did not awaken much interest in him. But at length he came across a highly-colored account of his own escapade, about which were sprinkled a number of very strong adjectives with which to qualify the nouns "fool," "ass," and "idiot." But the concluding lines made him jump from his chair in excitement, while great beads of perspiration broke out upon his brow. They ran thus:

"It was afterwards ascertained that the cause of all this annoyance had given a false address; however a half-mad individual calling himself Lord Ammonite, and who wore very long hair and carried a paint-brush in his hand, was afterwards arrested. So far identification has been impossible,



owing to the fact that the desperado purposely concealed his features in a brass bassoon; but no doubt is entertained by the authorities as to the prisoner being the real culprit. Contempt of military ceremonies is a capital offence, and the execution will probably take place next week."

Great Heavens! Here was Salvator Rosa Stubbs taking his name, and going to be hanged for his offence! "I must go and release him at once," said Lord Ammonite. Then he reflected that if he did he would probably be hanged himself. So he decided that he'd be hanged if he would. But what was to be done? Where was Molly, his only friend, his infallible rescuer, his right hand? Gone. That reminded him that he must go at once and repossess himself of that other right hand whose absence had been the cause of all his trouble and of the critical position of Stubbs. He started off to fetch it, and as he went he said to himself, "Yes! But why does Stubbs take my name at all?" Just then the crestfallen and discharged Nurse McFuss went past him. "Perhaps he knows," reflected the perplexed old man. "It was to him that I heard Stubbs pass himself off as Lord Ammonite. I'll ask him," and he called the nurseman to him.



From McFuss his lordship learned that Stubbs and he had stayed behind, under the cavalierly protection of Private Jacqueline Smart, to dine with the combined armies. That during dinner, although Salvator Rosa had sent quite a number of tender messages to Captain Chowseletop, that young lady, inflated with the honors showered upon her as the heroine of the hour, had not deigned to notice the humble Sally. Indeed, for two whole days had she neglected him. Nor had the promised title been forthcoming. The simple painter had been a little premature in dubbing himself Lord Ammonite. Had in fact reckoned his chickens before they were hatched. When McFuss had told him that the title Charlie proposed to bestow on him was merely counterfeit; and Jacky Smart had hinted that the captain's intentions were equally base; Sally's virtuous indignation boiled over, and he swore a terrible oath that Charlie should wed him within a week or one of them should die. Himself for choice. He did not care to live alone. With his arrest most providentially came the means to carry out his vow. He would not have his innocence proclaimed or proved; but was most anxious to be found guilty of Ammonite's offence; for, according



to Utopian law, a convicted malefactor must either be put to death, or married. The latter merciful alternative only being extended to the male or weaker sex. By these means the artless village laddy hoped to bring his lover to the scratch.

Ammonite heard this story with amazement, not unmingled with relief. There was clearly no need for him to give himself up to justice until Charlie had proved herself too mean to save her humble lover from the gallows.

"If, however, this should be so, what's to be done then?" asked his lordship.

"You must get an alibi for Stubbs," replied McFuss.

"An alibi!" exclaimed the nobleman.

"Yes. There are plenty of good ones to be had. They run to a longish price, though; but I suppose your lordship would not mind that to save the poor young man;" said the nurse.

"Certainly not;" replied Lord Ammonite. "Cost is no object at such a time. I shall leave it to you, McFuss. Get the best article that can be procured, irrespective of price, and send the bill in to me. If necessary get two or three, or even half a dozen alibis. I would give all I'm worth rather



than that young man should expiate my accidental offence upon the gallows.

McFuss said it was evident Ammonite's heart was in the right place, and told him he might rely on him. The wily nurse secretly resolved to get Jacky Smart, who was a handy girl, to knock up a home-made alibi that would answer every purpose, and they might share a good stiff price between them. McFuss would have made an excellent business man in that barbaric age when male creatures indulged in mercantile pursuits.

This little matter satisfactorily settled, Ammonite was wondering how he should pass the evening, when "The great Sammy Lectern," rode up, intending to escort the party to the National Theatre and possibly have a snack with them before starting. He was much affected on hearing the melancholy news, and made some apt quotations from popular plays of the day, such as: "Oh! That her too, too solid flesh has melted, thawed and resolved itself into a parrot!" and "To be, or not to be; that is the question. Whether it were better for the child to suffer the mumps and measles of outrageous fortune; or to take a draught against a sea of troubles and by reducing itself to its elements, to end them."



"At any rate;" continued the comedian, "if Chowseletop's child has collapsed and shuffled off her mortal coil, I don't see why you should not accompany me. We produce a new play to-night of a highly ethical tendency, and with unexampled realism. The work is designed to teach a great moral lesson. Will you come?"

Ammonite hesitated. There could be no harm in attending moral lectures on such an occasion; especially if none of the family knew of it. Still he hesitated.

"Besides I can give you, if you like, a peep behind the scenes;" said the actor.

His lordship immediately decided to go; and merely detaining the great one whilst he got his right hand; which he bade assist him to make his most effective toilet; he was soon seated by Lectern in his aerostatic buggy, tearing away to the National Theatre.

This gigantic building was shaped after the style of Vespasian's Colliseum in the ruins of ancient Rome; and although capable of accommodating one hundred thousand people, its acoustic properties were so perfect that the softest sigh upon the stage or arena clearly reached all portions of the auditorium. The action of the plays occurred



in the centre, and thus the absurd necessity to keep the actor's face in one direction was obviated; and the action itself could be arranged just as it might have happened in real life. There were no foot-lights, either, for the mummers to face. All lighting was done naturally according to the scenic requirements. Interiors or cities would be illuminated with electric light by night or daylight by day; whilst flowery fields would bask in rays of real sunshine according to their habit in nature. These desideratums were effected by the use of large tanks upon the roofing of the building; in which, by means of powerful concentrators, sunshine was caught and stored. This could be turned on according to the intensity required; varying from dull daylight to the scorching rays of the tropical summer. Smaller tanks, in a similar manner supplied moonshine for sentimental love-scenes.

Realism was carried to a truly admirable extent. Not only on the stage or arena were the genuine effects of light and darkness, heat or cold employed; but in the auditorium the understanding was assisted, the imagination stimulated, and the reality of the representation enhanced by the introduction of appropriate surroundings. On entering the building, each visitor was supplied by the



usher with the necessary outfit for the evening, which consisted of a programme, a pair of opera glasses, and such accessories in the shape of clothing, etc., as might be required by the exigencies of the piece about to be performed. If a sunny landscape was to be put on, white alpaca umbrellas with green linings were provided. Perhaps this might be followed by a shower of rain, in which case mackintoshes and heavy boots formed part of the kit. For winter frost and snow the audience were provided with thick overcoats, woolen gloves and mufflers; whilst, during affecting dramas, handkerchiefs, more or less impregnated with the pungency of onions, were on hand to assist the spectator to that cherished indulgence of a "real good cry."

Nor, as in the olden times, were the senses merely of seeing and hearing appealed to; but those of feeling, taste and smell were also catered for. For instance, if a dinner-scene should occupy the stage, the spectators ate and drank in common with the actors, of the self-same concentrated food; and thus were more in sympathy with their inner feelings; or, were the action in a flower garden, a farm, a tannery, a public house, or a ship at sea; the odor of lilies and roses, cow manure, bark,



stale beer, or engine oil and bilge water were subtly disseminated around. In the latter instance, also, a pitching and rolling motion, and enamelled iron basins were considerately supplied. Nautical drama was an imposing spectacle when the waves rose mountains high and the ship labored heavily through the angry billows, whilst the heroine watched over the suffering hero, and all but the old sailors in the audience, loudly gave vent to their sympathetic sickness.

The Utopians were a most appreciative audience. This was not strange with all these incentives to fellow-feeling; but their fellow-feeling did not always make them wondrous kind. At times when a double-dyed villain stalked the stage they would give her a very rough reception. If dramatic justice was too tardy, they would take the law into their own hands, and punish her with a shower of thick boots, umbrellas, iron basins, or anything that came handy. On the other hand, no favor was too great to shower on their favorite heroes. The gentlemen who played those parts were by a special dispensation of government exempt from fulfilling the duty of all male Utopians at the "Fiancée Fairs. Otherwise their appearance in the market would have caused a



competitive riot amongst the marrying ladies. Such was their popularity. "The Great Sammy" was the comic man of the troupe. Dull, heavy, and stupid; his naturally clumsy and ponderous manner made all laugh. They did not want brightness and sparkling wit in a man. That was the province of the soubrette and comedienne. These ladies were particularly lively both on and off the stage.

Ammonite was conducted to a private box which had been reserved for the whole party. This elegant compartment was on a level with the arena, and had a door at the back which communicated with that mysterious and fascinating wonderland called "Behind the Scenes." In this case "Around the Scenes" or "Under the Seats" would have been a more appropriate title.

The play which he was to witness was called a psychological drama. The first scene was a sick chamber, where the hero lay dying of a broken heart. Everything was wonderfully life-like—except the hero. The entire house was impregnated with an odor of linseed poultices and turpentine cloths which had been applied to the suffering society beauty; but without avail. The rent in his heart grew greater each moment, and it



threatened to "break in twain." This his aged father explained in a beautiful soliloquy, whilst writing an obituary notice of his dying darling for insertion in the society papers. At length it was done, and the poor young man was propped up with pillows to correct the spelling and generally improve his father's literary effort. This clever dramatic device gave him an opportunity to tell the audience how good he had been, and what a blameless life he had led. Also to get in a nasty rap or two at the heroine who had deceived him and left him to die. This done, he was proceeding to expire happily, when the band struck up a lively air; and in walked "The Great Sammy," attired as a priest. This was the signal for a yell of laughter from the audience. Sammy solemnly took off his gloves, at which the audience screamed with delight; blew his nose, which was a still greater success; and sat down on a newly-prepared mustard plaster. At this last brilliant stroke of humor the whole house went into fits of merriment. Some more fooling of this funereal sort took place, until the spectators fairly tired themselves with laughing; then the artful author turned on the pathetic tap again.

The hero wanted to see once more before he



died the little cot where he was born; the babbling brook wherein he used to wade; the ruined mill where first he met his faithless love, and the brilliant ball-room wherein their troth was plighted. So they were all brought in. The real things, mind you. No imitations. Who would deceive a dying man? He recognized them at once and said a few lines of blank verse to each of them. This was a very fine effect; only unfortunately they took up a good bit of space and the sick-room was so full that "The Great Sammy" had to sit upon the ruined mill with his feet in the babbling brook. But he bore it without wincing; which made the audience merry again, and nearly spoilt the pathos of the scene.

This was not the author's intention. It was a first night, and accidents will happen. Sammy ought to have been off the stage. As soon as he realized this fact, he did the best thing he could under the circumstances. He remained upon the mill and made his exit with it.

Now, after all this, one naturally expected the hero to die happy and give some one else a chance; but still he was not quite satisfied. He wanted to see the sun rise upon the glad New Year. Being the first of April, this whim was more than the



most doting and indulgent of parents could gratify. "Can my darling wait a little while?" asked the fond father.

But alas! he couldn't. He was in a hurry to die.

The distracted father tried to coax him into thinking of something else. He freely volunteered to see that his grave was kept green; pledged himself to shed a tear-drop o'er his tomb regularly three times a day after meals; and promised to embalm his vacant chair with sighs. All to no purpose. The obstinate hero just wanted to see the sun rise upon the glad New Year. That was all. So at last the poor old man determined at all hazards that his son should have his wish. Kissing his boy he snatched his hat and stick and dashed out of the house. How he was going to manage the job he didn't say.

Adolphus has barely had time to speculate prettily upon the chances of his dying there alone, with nobody to close his eyes and tie up his chin; when,—enter the villain of the piece: An elderly lady of title, accompanied by a retinue of shapely young ladies. She carries a jewelled casket containing her heart, and the retinue of lovely damsels carry bags of gold, which represent her fortune.



These they lay at the foot of the bed ; and consequently at the hero's feet. The titled lady pleads, and the hero hesitates. The retinue add their entreaties in favor of their mistress. A most effective struggle sways the hero's breast. On the one hand is a martyrdom of shame and death by a broken heart. On the other riches, affluence, and a titled wife. Still he hesitates. At length when all other arguments have proved abortive ; his father returns. He has failed in his mission. His boy will never see the sun rise upon the glad New Year. This decides him. He will not die. He flings his shattered vital organ to the ground ; right and left ventricle on either side ; and accepts the lady's heart and fortune ; amidst the rejoicings of the retinue. On this impressive scene the first act ended.

"The Great Sammy" immediately popped his head in at the back of Ammonite's box, and asked his lordship if he'd like to come round and be introduced to the villain of the piece. The worthy fossil replied that he'd much rather meet the "retinue," if it was all the same ; and he followed Lectern through the doorway.

"What is the moral to be learned from to-night's play?" asked Ammonite, as they strode along a



dimly-lighted passage. "I confess I see none up to now."

"It shows the fearful penalty of young people marrying old ones for money and for rank," replied the comedian. "You will presently see how much better it had been for Dolly to have died of a broken heart; even without seeing the New Year's sun; than to have sold himself for riches. But here we are at the Green Room," and he flung open the door of a spacious apartment furnished with every conceivable luxury.

Lounging about in various indolent attitudes, Ammonite at once perceived the "retinue." They did not wait to be introduced. They seemed to be very free-and-easy young ladies who formed the titled lady's retinue. They swarmed around his blushing lordship, took his arms and led him to a seat, with as many little endearments and caresses as if he had been their father. "The Great Sammy," seeing him thus make himself at home, left him in this choice company, and went about his business.

Now Ammonite had never yet been behind the scenes; not even in his former life; and he didn't quite know what to do. But he made a pretty good guess. He asked the ladies if they would



take a little refreshment. They would; so several bottles of champagne were ordered in (theatrical people always drink in bulk), and for an hour his lordship had a lively time of it. At length his jolly companions must go upon the stage and again take their part in the great moral drama, so Lord Ammonite essayed to find his private box alone. Somehow, he missed his way. He thought the play must have taken a nautical turn; for everything had got a pitching movement; and he experienced a touch of the unpleasant sensation associated with a sea-scene in that most realistic theatre. He almost expected, nay hoped to find, an iron basin in his box. Wandering through dismal passages, at length in the distance he saw a blaze of light. He made for this, and found himself—right in the middle of the stage.

How the retinue giggled and how the leading artistes scowled! But the audience yelled with delight as the intruder said thickly yet blandly, "Will you—hic! kindly show me the way out." Here was another character; evidently a new comic, popped on the stage right in the culminating crisis of the most pathetic portion of the play! "What a brilliant idea of the author," every one said. "So original; and so daring!" But when



the hero, who was again very busy dying, jumped from his couch, and, taking the intruder by the scruff of the neck, pitched him back down the rustic well whence he had emerged, thus anticipating the retributive end reserved for the villain; that titled lady expostulated. A stormy scene ensued which culminated in the premature termination of the play and the dissatisfied departure of the audience.

Ammonite lay at the bottom of the well, confused and helpless, when one of the pitying retinue offered to see him right and asked him to give her his hand. He did so. He took it out of his pocket and placed it in her tiny palm. She uttered a cry of horror, dropped the thing and fled. Poor old fossil! this time his amputated limb had done him good service. It had probably saved him from an undesirable entanglement. "The Great Sammy Lectern" found him, carried him home, and put him to bed. His lordship's last words were "Shank you, old fell'r. hic! Shtage's great instit—hic! institution. Sharn't forget—hic! to-night's moral lessshion. Good-night, old F'ler. Mind you—hic! go straight home."



## CHAPTER XI.

## JOURNEY THROUGH THE EARTH'S CENTRE.

WHEN the squire visited Lord Ammonite in the morning, he found that nobleman suffering severely from swellings, both of the head and other parts; for the champagne with the "retinue," and the tumble down the well, had left the poor old man a battered wreck. Chowseletop suggested a swim; but the bruised old fossil dared not. He feared to expose himself, both figuratively and literally. "The Great Sammy Lectern" had promised to keep his little peccadillo a secret, especially from Professor Margaret Coddle; and his poor suffering fossilship was constrained to dress himself as best he could, keeping a pleasant countenance as if all the prominent portions of his anatomy were not bruised and his head aching all it could. Worse than this, he had to make his toilet with his left hand alone; for the recreant right was again missing, and he could not for the



life of him recollect what had become of it. He feared he might, in the fullness of his heart, and stomach, last night, have bestowed it on a member of the "retinue;" and was in momentary dread of some slap-dash young girl calling to claim his heart and fortune, which he probably promised with it. Worst of all, he did not dare consult his friend, Ned Chowseletop, in his dilemma. He could only wait to see his companion in guilt, the comic actor Lectern.

Never was that champion meal-cadger, "The Great Sammy," more welcome at a breakfast-table than he would have been that morning to Lord Ammonite. But, strange to say, he did not come. Miss Molly did, however; full of graciousness and smiles. Smiles which became most sweet and tender when bestowed on the aforetime fossil man. Bent upon keeping him amused and showing him the wonders of the neoteric world; for that day, Thursday, she had planned a trip to the antipodes through the Centri-mundane Shaft. In vain did Ammonite plead that he was thoroughly exhausted by the stirring events of yesterday; she and the squire pointed out that he had retired early to rest and ought to be recuperated. The fossil groaned guiltily. He dared not contradict.



Besides, they urged that the journey need cause him no fatigue, as the elevators were most comfortably furnished. So there was no escape. His lordship had to submit with a good grace, and trust to Providence and "The Great Sammy" to restore to him his missing hand whilst he went on a pleasure trip of eight thousand miles through the centre of the earth.

The Utopian terminus of the Great Centri-mundane Shaft was located in the capital city; and thither the three, Chowseftop, Ammonite and Miss Coddle proceeded by aericar. The depot was a building of great solidity and strength, towering to an enormous height; at the summit were the leviathan wheels, and blocks over which revolved the many indestructible, fireproof, steel ropes which connected the great counter-balanced cars. The broad principle on which these wonderful intra-terrestrial twin-elevators worked was quite simple, and may be briefly explained thus: Of equal specific gravity, they mutually sustained each other at either end of the yawning abyss which pierced the earth from point to point throughout its greatest diameter. But, as will readily be seen, the smallest additional weight placed on either end would cause the heavier car to start



upon its peremptory fall towards the centre of gravitation, which is the middle of our earthly sphere. And, the lighter compartment, being connected with the falling mass by continuous ropes revolving over wheels at each extremity, would also necessarily be drawn towards that attractive point or core. Now, as it is within the knowledge of the merest school-girl that falling substances rapidly gather and multiply their velocity; it will easily be seen that, in a journey of four thousand miles, which is the approximate distance from the earth's crust to its heart, a huge mass such as these elevators, filled with people and weighing several tons, would attain an almost fabulous rate of speed. Also it is a patent truth that where great impetus is acquired, as would be so in this case; moving objects, not meeting with arrestive opposition, will continue their course long after the motive power has ceased to exist. So it was with these cars; that, having reached the apex of the earth's attraction, their enormous impetus caused them to shoot beyond, until its all but exhausted force brought them slowly and gently to the terminus at the antipodes.

The journey from point to point occupied four hours; giving the average rate of travelling at two



thousand miles an hour; but it was estimated that in the centre, where of course the greatest speed was made; that the velocity was not less than ten thousand in sixty minutes, or about two hundred and fifty miles each second of time.

Now, when these little facts had been lucidly explained to Lord Ammonite, and he knew exactly where he was going and what he was going to do; although the matter was so simple; he felt a sort of sickly fear on approaching the elevator. It must not be supposed that the worthy man was short of courage; but we must remember that his nerves had been considerably shaken; and that he did not feel very well that morning.

Each passenger previous to entering was carefully weighed, and the sum telephoned to the other end, so that an equal weight might be adjusted and no premature start made; but, unfortunately for our blundering ancient Briton, he set his umbrella down before getting on the scales. Goodness only knows why he wanted an umbrella when bound on such a journey. Besides, such things were quite out of fashion now, being superseded by combination caps which answered every purpose. But the fact remains that he had it with him; and picked it up previous to entering



the car. The moment he set his foot on the elevator-floor, it commenced to sink slowly; and the poor old man; but for the forethought of Miss Coddle; would have gone upon that terrible journey alone. The weight of his gingham was quite sufficient to upset the nicely adjusted counterbalance.

With ready wit, the professor yelled, "You're too heavy. Throw something out," and Ammonite, just in the nick of time, flung out the offending umbrella, together with his hat, his coat, his boots, and would have gone to a much greater extent in the process of lightening himself had the car not steadied again, and the conductor assured him that all danger was at an end.

At length, all being aboard, and the attendant having thoroughly inspected the compressed air-supply, the lighting apparatus, and the heat exterminating machine; they were hermetically sealed; a seven-pound weight attached to the exterior, and thus at 10 A. M. exactly they started on their way.

The first sensation was that of slowly sinking. The daylight disappeared, and the dark, dank, dripping walls of the colossal well shone in the artificial light, like the dirty sides of a mining shaft. Then, as the monster-lift gained speed, the different strata of earth formation shot by in



one confused jumble of form and color. In each side of the huge box were transparent squares of some kind of unbreakable and indestructible glass of enormous thickness ; but as the speed accumulated, Ammonite could not see the value of these windows. Nothing could be recognized through them. All objects passed so quickly that the impression given was that of a shapeless blur.

Professor Coddle, however ; with her marvellous scientific skill, again came to the rescue, and produced some wonderful optical instruments of her own invention. In appearance they were like a pair of watchmaker's goggles ; she called them "Retinal Retaining Glasses," and they had the power to prolong impressions cast in the smallest fraction of a second upon the retina of the eyes to an indefinite extent, at the pleasure of the wearer. Ammonite adjusted a pair, and glanced at the walls of the tube which before had appeared to be flying upwards with inconceivable speed. He saw before him a section of rock, so perfectly steady that he could examine its surface with critical ease. And, strange to say, in whatever direction he turned, the same mass of granite met his view. It was now, in reality, hundreds of miles above him ; merely its image was still retained upon the



retina of his eye. So it would remain until he touched a point on his glasses when another sight would flash on him, and in like manner remain, or give place to others at his will.

Thus it was that certain inter-terranean sights might be seen and leisurely enjoyed by all. True, all could not view the same scenes ; for it was impossible mutually to time so exactly the changing of the images which struck the "Retinal Retaining Glasses." This will be obvious to those who recollect that at one part of the journey, the pace was two hundred and fifty miles a second ; and the field of view, when walled in by the solid earth, did not exceed a dozen square yards at a time. When the crust was passed, and the great hollow centre reached, the vision would of course be much more extensive.

The first things that attracted Ammonite's attention were veins of coal which being cut in sections showed plainly the shapes of trees of fabulous size ; proving that this valuable commodity of the days of steam and fuel, had, as wood, been nurtured by the light of heaven and flourished in primeval forests, 'neath which had walked the mastodon, the mammoth, and perchance the race of giants whose degenerate and pigmy image Adam



was. The trunks of these great trees, in some instances, must have been a hundred feet across, and their branches would have sheltered a twenty-acre field. While viewing the topmost heights of one of these, Lord Ammonite exclaimed with glee, "I've found a nest. It's large enough to hold a horse," he said.

"Doubtless you have discovered one of those mythical articles commonly called 'a mare's nest;'" laughed Ned Chowseletop. "Now I have on my retina an object of real interest;" he continued.

"What is it?" asked Miss Coddle.

"A fossil man," replied her brother-in-law.

"Really! Describe him," said Ammonite eagerly.

"Well, he's short and stout;" said the squire; "with a plain, round, chubby face and bald head. He is slightly bow-legged; and minus the right hand."

"Why, that's me," ejaculated Ammonite, totally regardless of grammar.

"Yes," laughed Chowseletop. "I happened to look at you with my glasses set. I got an awful fright, at first, I can tell you."

"Really! I don't see why you should," said



Molly indignantly; which graceful speech made his lordship's heart thump.

Soon after this, Chowsestop discovered a most prolific gold reef. The spar-like quartz was not only impregnated with glittering grain, but huge nuggets stuck out several inches beyond the surface. "Why, it must crush one hundred ounces to the ton," said Chowsestop.

Ammonite was terribly excited. "Were there no means to mark the spot?" he asked.

"None whatever," answered Molly Coddle. "We are probably five hundred miles below it now."

"But there is a fortune lying there;" pursued his lordship.

"There are a great many fortunes buried within this world of ours; but they are quite out of our reach;" replied the good lady. "Here we get a glimpse of the riches of the earth; but they are not for us. We must learn to pass them by without a sigh. A useful moral lesson may be learned by a journey through the centre of the earth. A little while ago," continued Miss Molly; "while looking at a section of blue shale, just before my eyes, within my reach as it were, was an uncut diamond of enormous magnitude. But I took no heed. It was an illusion. The



sight was mine: imprinted on my brain; retained by the application of my own inventive skill. But the substance had but flashed past; and I, with all my scientific power, cannot even hope to see it once again; much less to possess myself of it. So it is with many bright and dazzling objects in this world. Before we have fully realized their beauty and their brilliancy, they are gone from us forever. Let us thank that kind Providence which still gives us the means to hold their image with us in that retina of the mind which poets call "sweet, gentle, tender, loving, heaven-sent Memory."

For half an hour or so they journeyed through the bowels of the globe, observing only such mineral formations as Ammonite with his smattering of geology found more or less familiar; but after that they penetrated a lower stratum. One that the mining skill of his contemporaries had never probed; and here fearful surprises awaited him. A region teeming in great abundance with earth-life, and worm-like creatures, such as in lilliputian form infest the surface soils.

As the pace increased the snaps or splashes, so to speak, of vision caught up by the Retina Retaining Glasses; though occupying the same



infinitesimal fraction of time to collect ; naturally expanded in area ; and now a perfect view of one hundred feet of the tube's interior was absorbed and held for examination, at each glance. Moreover, Professor Molly, with her usual kindly forethought, had brought for his use her lithoscope, or penetrating spy-glass ; which the reader will remember enabled one to see some distance through a stone wall, and was most potent when used on the soft subsoil midst which they travelled. Thus it was that Ammonite could view the wonderful structures and workings of the creatures of the earth's inner coating or "crumb," as it was called in contradistinction to the outer layer or "crust."

He saw glow-worms the size of boa-constrictors dragging their slimy length through the yielding earth ; and slugs whose bulk exceeded that of an ox appeared like hideous masses of glutinous gelatine. From their loathsome mouths oozed a viscid froth ; and in the place of eyes, two flabby antennæ with almost human arm-like motions felt their way along. The sight of these ghastly mollusks was enough to cause an involuntary shudder of horror. He saw bugs, spiders and other insects with such grotesque and ludicrous anatomies that he laughed aloud ; and again such frightful, hein-



ous, hellish-looking things that he dared not gaze on them. But all were sightless. Totally devoid of eyes. And the rapacious ferocity of these monsters seemed multiplied in the same ratio with their bulk. All appeared to live by preying on the lesser creatures. On one occasion, within the space of half a minute, his lordship saw a big fat bug fall upon a baby insect and demolish it. The next moment the bug passed down the gullet of a monster earwig; which in turn was swallowed by a comical spider who fed himself with his tail; after the manner of an elephant's trunk; and while masticating the dainty morsel wagged his tail with glee. But a slug came along; caught hold of the spider's narrative with his fingery feelers, and in a second the epicurean insect slid down the monster's slimy throat. What ate the slug Ammonite did not wait to see.

A change of venue presented to the noble traveller a most engrossing sight. A colossal centipede was being attacked by an army of giant ants. These intelligent creatures, each measuring about three inches long, had armed themselves with a variety of weapons; such as spears made from dried and hardened spider's legs; swords whose blades were formed from the sharp jaws of ear-



wigs ; clubs, the thigh bones of centipedes themselves, slings of dried slug hide, stones of granite, and shields of glow-worm skins. They marched in perfect form of battalions, companies and squares ; flinging themselves upon the mighty foe on every flank. In vain the monster struck out with his hundred feet, crushing and killing whole regiments at each blow ; others still flowed on to fill the gaps. Some brought scaling ladders made of spider's webbing ; and mounting on their enemy's back, buried their weapons until his dorsal regions looked like the skin of an enraged porcupine. At length his strength gave out ; then they bound his myriad of nether limbs together, and slinging them on poles across ; bore him, back downward, on their shoulders towards their dwelling place, where he would doubtless be potted and pickled to serve this plucky and provident little people as winter food.

Now the earth's crumb is obscured by a cloud of smoke so thick and opaque that even the lithoscope can barely penetrate its density. If retained upon the retina, it has the appearance of compact curly masses of finest wool, which ; as they rotate within themselves, swelling out as it were, from the centre, each side revolving in opposite direc-



tions, and every point being a centre ; take divers delicate tints ; running through the whole gamut of the rainbow. Here and there a puff spurts out from the rolling bulk, darts up a little way, then spreading itself, umbrella-like, turns around and upwards towards its under surface, and itself becomes a boiling ball ; increasing rapidly in size, and forming another huge eruptive mass like its fellows.

And now the sound of a mighty roaring penetrated the hermetically sealed and massive cage ; rapidly assuming such tremendous power that, were one of the occupants to shout his loudest, he could not have heard the sound of his own voice. This naturally put a stop to all conversation. Lord Ammonite had stood within a battery where more than fifty stamping machines were in full play ; crushing gold out of the hardest ore of banket formation, and probably producing the greatest continuous noise ever heard on the surface of the earth ; but the voice of that mighty hammering was a gentle whisper compared to this which he now heard.

The gigantic bubbling clouds now take more luminous tints ; and here and there a forked tongue of fire flits through them like a flash of



lightning. Once the darting flame strikes at the window through which his lordship looks; but it merely spreads itself, as a jet of water might do, splashes around and dribbles down in golden rivulets. Then with an awful suddenness this cloudy canopy is passed, and the car shoots into that blazing sea of fiercest fire which forms the great earth's centre.

It is an appalling sight. A terrible sensation. Although all is peace and comfort within, save for the deafening roar; outside, on every hand, the angry flames lick and lap the intruding vehicle; flinging themselves upon it as if bent on its instantaneous destruction. Ever and anon some great wave of fire will hurl itself against the car, causing it to shiver like an affrighted living thing, as a ship will do when struck by a petulant sea. It needs a strong-nerved man to coolly stand and view this awful spectacle. Ammonite, at first is quite prostrated with alarm and awe; but his utter extermination not coming so quickly as he anticipates; he recovers and resumes the use of his Retina Retaining Glasses. There is no limit to his vision now. He is no longer in a narrow shaft; but passing through an illimitable ocean of conflagration. A flaring furnace which



has been feeding and fattening itself upon its own flames; consuming its consummate incandescence; and thus growing more powerful and potent until, at last, it shall burst its bonds; break through its puny walls and swallow up the great globe itself, till naught but charred and calcined ashes shall float throughout eternity about the trackless universe. Surely this is the den of the Destroyer.

Whirling, spurting, spitting around the car; leaping, floating, flying, some little distance off; or waving, undulating, and swaying in the far-away distance, where a horizon of molten gold meets a sky of flame; the volatile, erupting, restless figures of fire took fantastical form in Ammonite's eyes; and whether his artfully extended eyesight also had some assistance from his highly-wrought imagination or not, his fossilship believed that he saw some wonderful things.

Upon the white crest of a fiery billow an ugly creature sat. In shape like a hideous toad; the whole of its anatomy was glowing and transparent. The throbbing of an ardent red-hot iron ventricle pumped the fiery fluid which could be seen coursing through its livid veins. It must have been a martyr to the heart-burn. Its bones, which were black like charcoal, smoked and smouldered and



threw off sparks. Its eyes were of fire-clay badly baked, so that the color had run; and as it sat upon its haunches and washed its face just like a cat; the saliva from its tongue, on touching the scorching paw, spluttered and frizzled just as fat will do when dropped into a hot frying-pan. Whilst Ammonite gazed, it ceased its ablutionary labors; and stooped its head and drank a long deep draught from a fountain of fire by which it sat. He saw the fluid pass into its interior; and there it boiled like molten glass in a retort; whilst the hissing noise which followed, as the brute belched back the deadly fumes or spit its toad-like venom, was distinctly audible above the roaring of the fires. Presently it moved away; and its action, a series of erratic bounds, each accompanied by a loud report, resembled the antics of a jumping cracker. This was one of the many varieties of salamander which infest the inner fiery regions.

A little later Lord Ammonite uttered a cry of horror and amazement; for there before his eyes he suddenly saw a crowd of human beings. Beheld the grilling, frying, frizzling forms of men and women after his own kind. Some of them he even recognized. They were acquaintances, friends of his by-gone life. The sight was sickening. So



this was Hades. He had more than once been told to go there; but little did he ever think that he should gratify the desires of his enemies; at least in such an extraordinary conveyance. Miss Coddle told him his vision was merely an illusion; or else something had gone wrong with his retina. The conductor also said, "It's the first time that complaints have been made by travellers as to unpleasant sights. You must have got 'em again, sir." It may have been so. After his unaccustomed debauch of the previous night he was far from well. Still he persisted that the forms he saw were no fantasies; but naked facts: in the literal sense. He asked Molly to look for herself; but of course, under those circumstances, she modestly declined.

There were Ammonite's stockbroker; his lawyer; his estate bailiff, and a sprinkling of his tradesmen, all dancing wildly to a mad tune piped upon a golden flute by a handsome, fair-haired, female imp whose face he did not recognize. But the look of exhilaration on her pitiless features contrasted strangely with the expression on those of the dancers, or rather contortionists; for their movements resembled the writhing of despair rather than a reel of delight. All the countenances were



drawn up in agony; and the constant stepping seemed to arise from fear of resting the naked feet upon the white hot flames. The toes and fingers too were curled up as with excruciating torture, and many were charred and frizzled at the tips. The right hand of a lawyer in particular was hideously burned. He could not raise it over his head as others did. He was compelled to keep it in the place where other people's pockets would have been.

And now a crowd of women joined the throng; amongst them dainty damsels Ammonite remembered having known in his college days. To these a male devil played upon a golden fiddle; whilst other demons pierced and probed them into action with diamond-headed darts; blinded and maddened them by swishing silks and satin in their eyes; or scourged them on their backs with knotted ropes made from richest raiments. Around their wrists were chains of molten gold, which scarred and scorched their flesh. Bands on their fingers burned them to the bone. A little lady Ammonite had once loved, had none of these additional tortures; still she danced the devil's dance; her pitiful face glancing ever and anon over her shoulder, as if she looked for one who did not



come. Poor girl! Had she been of his rank he might have married her; but ere the thought had passed out of his lordship's brain, she darted forward and flung her delicate arms around a new-comer. A man. Ammonite recognized him. Great God! It was himself.

The fossil man fell, swooning, to the floor.



## CHAPTER XII.

### FIFTY MILES ABOVE THE CLOUDS.

CAPTAIN CHARLIE CHOWSELTOP was undoubtedly the heroine of the hour. Her brilliant playing at soldiers on the occasion of the Battle of New Rock Island, had placed her at once in the front rank both for pluck, brilliancy and military skill. Everybody said she ought to be made a general ; and she felt that they were right. The uniform was most becoming, and ought to suit her. She was sure she could show it off to great advantage. She was very proud of the position which she had occupied in the great war-game. How she had got there she didn't quite know. This is often the case with generals and others who accomplish exploits which the world raves about. Indeed Charlie had been very much surprised when the enemy had foolishly moved one of his important pieces and so discovered his chief in check to the gallant captain. Of course, according to strict rules,



"discovered check" was not allowable; and that piece ought to have been put back. But there was an antipathy to retreating in military circles; and the irregularity was overlooked, the game proceeding on the position as it stood. But for this, Charlie's glory would never have taken her or anybody else by surprise. The conceited captain also forgot the fact that, but for the protecting presence of a sturdy pawn; otherwise Private Jacqueline Smart; her position would have been totally untenable. Instead of standing there, the observed of all observers, and turning the tide of the whole battle; she would have been ignominiously taken by an opposing common soldier of the Southern Cross; and removed from any further active interest in the game.

If these reflections ever popped in upon the lucky young lady, she did not invite them to stay. She quickly bowed them out; and at each repeated call upon her memory, that discreet and exclusive personage was "not at home."

Now that she was to be General Chowseltop, she mused, some change would be necessary in her mode of life. Since she had met Lord Ammonite and learned that the old title she had proposed to buy for Sally Stubbs was not genuine; she had



not been able to see that little man and frame some other means to pacify him. Indeed, she had been very busy, having found a farrier's son who much attracted her; of a different type of beauty to Stubbs, he was big and burly, muscular and strong. Perhaps he was not quite so simple as the village painter; but he had a rough horse-playful way which pleased the amorous Charlie. Moreover this son of Vulcan was not so exacting as the village beauty, and did not stipulate that his favored admirers should bestow on him a title. Had he done so, truth to state, he might have had as many handles to his name as a coming king of the olden times. In this matter of titles, too; it had occurred to the successful soldier that it might not be amiss; now that she was prominent amongst her fellow-women; to treat herself to something of a genuine and reliable character; instead of throwing her money away on flashy imitations to gratify the vanity of silly little chits of men. Or, better still, now that her order of precedence in choosing at the "Fiancée Fair" would be much advanced; she might even marry a lord, and thus become "my lady." Then her thoughts reverted to the fossil man, and his pre-historic patent of nobility; and she said to herself with a little sigh, that she



hoped she had not been rude to him. "After all, he wasn't at all bad looking; and if his mind were carefully moulded he might make a fairly good husband, as husbands go." From all of which it may be gathered that poor Mr. Stubbs stood very little chance of being rescued from his impending fearful fate by his fickle soldier lover.

It was Jacky Smart who first told Captain Chowseletop of her rustic beauty's escapade; and, believing Sally guilty of the act with which he was charged, she felt more annoyed than ever with him. She knew the foolish man was eccentric; or that he tried to be: but to gallop through the ranks of an enemy, upsetting them all over a public battle-field, to the derision of the onlookers, was more than mere eccentricity. It was madness; and so far as she was concerned the law must take its course. So she said to Private Smart. Thus Miss Jacky told the Nurse McFuss; and thus they both decided that an alibi must be prepared for Sally's salvation, and for this Lord Ammonite would have to pay a good stiff price.

Poor Lord Ammonite! We left him fainting on the floor of the saloon car, 'mid the hellish fires which rage around the centre of the earth. Poor stricken man, he mercifully remained insensible



whilst the later horrors of the Centri-mundane Shaft were passed, and when he opened his eyes, the party had emerged from the opposite end of the bottomless pit, and he found himself at rest upon a couch at an hotel near the Southern Cross terminus. Molly was watching at his side with gentle, patient solicitude. At first he didn't speak. He lay thinking. The room was lighted with artificial light. Through the windows shone stars in strange unfamiliar shapes. He saw the constellation of the Southern Cross. It must be night. How long then had he lain? He knew that they left Utopia at ten o'clock on Thursday morning and that the journey was to occupy four hours. That would fix the hour of their arrival at two in the afternoon. But now it was dark. At length he ventured to ask the time.

"Just two-thirty A. M.," replied Molly.

"Good gracious!" said Ammonite, jumping up, "then I've been insensible from Thursday noon till Friday morning."

"Oh, dear! no," said Molly, "this is Thursday morning. We arrived here half an hour ago."

His lordship stared. "But we started at ten on Thursday morning. How can it now be two-thirty A. M. on the same day?" he cried.



"You forget," quietly answered Professor Coddle. "We are at the antipodes and have stolen half a day's march on time. We shall lose it again, going back; for although we start from here at three A. M., and the journey only occupies four hours, it will be seven o'clock in the evening when we arrive at Utopia."

"Start from here in half an hour. Spend a whole day in that—that——" words failed him. "No. I'll be hanged if I do," ejaculated Ammonite. "No more Centri-mundane travelling for me." And he shuddered as he thought of himself in that fire. Even the embrace of the beautiful girl would be objectionable, under those circumstances. Both Miss Coddle and the squire tried to persuade him that the creatures in the fire were but the products of his imagination. Nothing of the kind had ever been seen before, they said. But all they could get from him was a determined statement that he'd take especially good care that nothing of the sort should ever be seen again, by him. That is, so long as he could avoid it. He would not again travel by "the bottomless pit" as he called it, if it took him twelve months to get back any other way: aye, even if he never returned at all. So their plans had to be re-



arranged. It was Chowsetop who made the first suggestion. "Look here; it is now Thursday morning;" said he. "I have no pressing engagements at home until Saturday. What do you say if we make the most of our time, and show his lordship a little bit of the world?"

Molly was quite agreeable; only she ventured to suggest that she had not come prepared for travelling; expecting merely to make a pop visit to the antipodes; and that she feared the state of her purse. Ammonite also had very little cash.

It may here be mentioned, in parentheses, that his lordship had applied, through the squire as his best friend, and had been granted the usual patrimonial start in life; which would last him easily until he could prove his title to his old estates. With this money he had opened a credit account at the National Bank, and it was pointed out that cheques were now negotiable all over the world. No delay for identification was necessary, as the likeness of the cashee was telegraphed and verified unknown to him as he stood at the bank counter. Chowsetop, however, would let Ammonite pay for nothing. He was his guest. So the proposed two-days' trip was put upon the *tapis* for discussion.



Ammonite had been greatly fascinated by a scheme of "arrested mundane attraction" of which he had read; and he wanted to know if they could return to Europe by that method. This, as Molly Coddle pointed out, was impossible. The *modus operandi* of this latest form of travelling was very simple. Indeed it was not travelling at all. The revolving earth itself did all the work. All one had to do was just to wait till the globe rolled by. It was merely a system of ascending to a great height and then resting on a cloud, until a certain portion of the world slipped away beneath you, then popping down again on the desired spot. Of course the capabilities of this mode of travelling were limited. No latitudinal variation could be attained, inasmuch as the rotation of the earth on its axis was from west to east only. If the tourist ascended at the equator; on the equator he must descend. He could only journey so many degrees to the westward; according to the time he waited up aloft. Or if he chose to pass just twenty-four hours in the ether regions he might come down exactly at his starting-point. In the same manner, therefore, any one ascending at "Old London" must remain over some portion of the globe which lay in 51°



50' north latitude; which was the position of the Great Metropolis of Ancient Britain. Therefore, as Professor Coddle endeavored to point out to the thick-headed old fossil, they being now in 34° south latitude, to take them home again it would be necessary for the accommodating earth, after going the same round for millions of years, to put itself out of its way and oblige them by rotating, not only from west to east, but also from north to south at the same time. This they could not well expect it to do. It would have made all the seasons go wrong, and upset the calculations of the farmers most seriously. There was no help for it. They were in 34° south latitude, and there they must remain, if they intended to travel on the annihilation of gravitation system.

Ammonite said he didn't care. He should like to go up into the heavens. It would be such a pleasant change after being down below. So a "Map of the Celestial Domains, and Guide-book to Space," was procured; from which Ammonite and Chowseftop tried to sketch out a journey. It might have been a "Bradshaw's Guide" for all the squire could make of it, and to his lordship it was as great a mystery as a navigator's book of logs, sines and secants. Molly, of course, came to



the rescue. She quickly found that there were only three landing places in latitude  $34^{\circ}$  south. These were the Cape of Good Hope, South America at the river Plate, and the island on which they stood, which was formerly called Australia. All the rest was water. She suggested a circular route, calling first on Table Mountain, then at the city of Buenos Ayres, afterwards going northward by the "Great Magnetic Attraction, Polar-power Railroad" to the capital of the Great Western Republic; and then home to Utopia by the Sub-Atlantic Pneumatic Tube.

Ammonite said he thought it would be a very nice little trip, only he doubted if they could do it comfortably in two days. He didn't like to be hurried. Poor silly man! He overlooked the fact that the first part of the journey would occupy just exactly, no time whatever. Miss Molly explained. At any time they ascended the same hour would they descend; although they would have quite a number of hours to wait above. They and the sun would stand still while the earth scampered beneath them. If they left Sidney at five o'clock it would be five at the Cape when it paused beneath them, and by the time Buenos Ayres got round, five o'clock would be



chiming on the great bells of the cathedral on the Plaza del Viente Cinco di Mayo, and the day would still be Thursday. But if they still stayed aloft until Sydney hove around again, the time would be five A. M., but the day would be Friday.

Ammonite said it was wonderful. But it was not. The same thing had been going on for thousands of centuries before his time: but then nobody had taken advantage of so simple a fact. Ammonite felt quite ashamed of his contemporary scientists. What had Edison been about, that he hadn't done this? Above all, why did his lordship never think of it himself? Bah! He felt that he despised his former self.

As it was now little past three in the morning, and the office for ethereal elevation did not open until light; it was decided that the party should take a little rest, and go upon their travels at ten, Thursday morning, April 4th, 2894, which was the precise time at which they left Utopia by the Centri-mundane Tube. Sleeping-rooms were taken, and gentle Morpheus was wooed and won.

All were up betimes. There was much to be done before parting with the earth and its controlling influences. To begin with, Miss Coddle had ascertained that the difference in time between



southeastern Australia and the African Cape was fully eight hours and a half. This represented the period they must remain poised in space, before descending on their first stopping place. So it was decided to take their luncheon with them. To have a sort of picnic in the cerulean vault of heaven. The squire, who had been sleepless, according to his habit in strange beds, proposed to while away the tedious waiting by indulging in a nap, so he popped out to purchase an air-pillow and a mackintosh sheet to lie upon, in case the skies were damp. He was also to get a coat, hat, pair of boots, and an umbrella for Ammonite. It will be remembered that his lordship pitched these articles from the car on starting from Utopia, and he had arrived at the antipodes in a state of dishabille. The old fossil was particular about the umbrella, although the squire was doubtful if such a thing could be found in the whole of the States of the Southern Cross. Still he'd try to get one, as his lordship wanted it so badly. Miss Molly wanted the latest novel; the wild flight of a mad imagination, dealing with life in the millennium.

Arrived at the ascending station, Lord Ammonite very nearly cried off, for on the means to rise



being explained to him, he found them even more appalling in their demands upon one's daring than the descent into the bottomless pit. So far as he could understand from Molly's lucid explanations, the process of arresting gravitation in a human creature was briefly thus:—We will give the professor's own argument and words:—

"Weight or heaviness is merely a comparative term signifying certain more or less susceptibility to the earth's attraction; and as the floating or sinking of an article in water depends upon whether the mass of water displaced is greater or less in weight than that which displaces it, so it is with air. The atmosphere, however, being much lighter, or less attracted by the earth, it follows that a substance which will just float in water, must sink in air, unless it displaces a very much greater quantity. Given these tenets, we find that man may float on air by displacing a certain bulk. A very large bulk, granted. Well now, how is this displacement effected? A bullet shot from a rifle forms momentarily a long vacuum tube, merely pushing the air aside; which being extremely elastic, quickly springs back to its place. But by making thus rapidly a similar boring, capturing the displaced gases, carrying them along with it,



and at the same time compressed within a receiver not exceeding itself in bulk; the bullet would gather an immense mass of condensed atmosphere whose weight would be greater than that of the lead, and on which therefore the bullet might float. This simple principle is applied to ourselves. With a condensing reservoir beneath us, we are placed in a monster mortar; and by the strongest explosive power; we are shot straight into the heavens. The impetus being exhausted at an altitude of fifty miles or more, we release the condensed air captured by ourselves in our flight; and stand, sit, or lie on it according to our will. Moreover, any inconvenience which might be experienced from the extremely rarefied state of the atmosphere at this altitude, is obviated by the gradual expansion of the condensed cloud, which of course supplies sufficient life-sustaining oxygen to suit the most fastidious taste."

Ammonite said "Thank you," but he couldn't quite see it. Doubtless to other than an Utopian the explanation was a little puzzling. Anyway, there were the mortars and the air reservoirs in the shape of cushioned chairs on which, for safety's sake, the travellers were usually strapped. There were the little taps at the sides for releasing the



cloud-like cradles in the skies; and there stood the operator, straps in hand, looking like an executioner; ready to dispatch his victim to the spacious firmament on high.

Each being provided with a bottle of "descending fluid;" Miss Coddle volunteered to show the way. She was securely strapped upon a chair reservoir, and being placed within the mouth of a monster mortar, with a cheery "Ta-ta, I'll meet you up aloft," she disappeared from sight. A moment's pause, and then a report as of ten thousand eighty-one-ton guns; and that was all. Lord Ammonite looked upwards. Not a speck broke the placid canopy of purest blue. In the space of a moment, Molly had gone beyond the reach of human eyes. With the aid of a powerful telescope, however, he could see her sitting on a little snow-white cloud, taking advantage of the seclusion to tittivate her hair and powder-puff her nose. She was evidently expecting him; so without further hesitation he sat upon the chair with his umbrella between his knees and submitted to the pinioning process with commendable presence of mind. Once inside the mortar he was going to shut his eyes when—Bang! and he heard Miss Coddle say, "Turn the tap on your left (it was lucky it wasn't



the right this time). He did so; and there was Molly sitting close by his side, demurely reading her novel, just as if pocket-glasses and powder-puffs were things she never dreamed of. And where was he? The straps with which he had been bound hung limp about his limbs; the chair had collapsed and he was laid upon what might have been a yielding feather-bed; with above and around him naught save intense blue unending space.

Yet he knew that had he rolled off that couch of clouds on to the lighter air around, a fall of fifty miles with consequent death and self-burial awaited him. Molly, to cheer him up a bit, told him of one to whom had happened such an accident, and whose body had gone right through a ten-story house, from ceiling to basement, and interred itself in the cellar to such a depth that the hole had since been utilized as a well; and furnished most superior drinking water, beneficial to patients with long liver trouble.

At this moment Edward Chowsestop arrived, and with him brought the luncheon-basket, so the little party was complete and every one smiled and looked happy.

The one thing that most impressed Lord Ammonite, as he lit a cigar and lounged back,



feeling no longer "of the earth earthy," but of the air airy; was the oppressive stillness which reigned around. It seemed so thick that he could have cut it. During the quietest night; at the most secluded spot our world can boast; in the centre of the trackless forest; becalmed upon the pathless ocean; in the prisoner's solitary cell, yea, in the tomb itself, there is sound of some sort. Here a virgin silence reigned supreme. The ticking of Professor Coddle's chronometer alone broke the painful tension on the yearning dissatisfied ear. It sounded like the thrumming of a kettle-drum. All sounds imported to this reign of perpetual quiet were multiplied a hundred-fold. When the intrepid travellers spoke, their voices seemed stentorian and unnatural. At first the effect was startling; but they soon got used to it; and the heavens rung with their chatter and their laughter. After they had spread the tablecloth on Chowsetop's cloud and had their picnic luncheon, they were in the very ecstasy of mirth and high spirits. The fact is the evaporation of the cloud-cumuli on which they rested was excessive and the air was overcharged with oxygen. This may have accounted for Molly Coddle's behavior



when the squire lay on his air-cushion and took his promised nap.

That hitherto sedate and prim old lady cast a killing look on Ammonite, and said, "At last we are alone." It was not strictly true; but Chowseltop's forty-horse-power snoring justified his absence being understood.

"You may have observed," continued the love-lorn lady, "that I have always taken the greatest interest in you, both as a man and as a fossil."

Ammonite thanked her, and said it was very kind.

"As the latter," continued Miss Coddle, "you were my exclusive property. I dug you up from a bit of waste ground that has been in our family for centuries; and you belonged to me just as much as if you had been a lump of coal. Is that not true?"

His lordship nodded and said he supposed it was.

"But when I gave you life;" proceeded Molly, with a touch of sadness in her tones, "I also gave you liberty. I relinquished all claims upon you."

"Save those of gratitude," interrupted Ammonite.

"I lost the most valuable specimen in my col-



lection of curiosities," Molly went on. "But I did so freely and contentedly. And why?"

His lordship said he didn't know. He'd give it up.

"I'll tell you why it was," said the lady, edging her cloud a little nearer to his. "I might have kept you in my laboratory and experimented on you bit by bit; breaking off just as much as I wanted at a time. I might have sent you to the World's Museum, and got the thanks of the directors nicely embossed on vellum. I might have run you round as an exhibition and made pots of money. But I did none of these. And why? Why have I made you one of the family? Why have I been near you night and day? Why was I so loath to part with your hand? Because, Lord Ammonite, I love you," and the good old lady in her excitement nearly toppled off the edge of her cloud.

His lordship, though much surprised at the avowal, was far from being offended. It was not usual for ladies to speak so plainly in his time; but of course things were different now. And he began to wonder what he should say if she should pop the question. All he did say was, "I'm sure, I'm very much obliged to you, indeed."



"You said when first we met," Professor Coddle resumed, "that we were old sweethearts once. Did you love me very much at that time?"

The fossil felt a little uneasy. It was such an awkward question.

"And what was I like then?" asked the lady, without waiting for an answer to her previous question.

Here Ammonite felt more at home, so he said, "Well, Miss Molly, you were kind, gentle, loving, and sympathetic. Never tired of adding to others' comforts. Of tender disposition and simple mind. Homely, domesticated, quiet though always cheerful, and not the least bit scientific."

"And did you marry me?" asked the professor.

"Well, no," stammered his lordship; and at that moment he could not for the life of him think why he didn't.

"What a dear good creature I must have been. Ha!" sighed Miss Molly, "I'm afraid there are few women like that now. But if I try to emulate my ancestors; if I throw science to the winds; if I submit myself to you; will you not teach me to be like her? Can you not mould my mind until it is a counterpart of hers? Will you not love me; be my husband? Hush!"



Before Ammonite could reply; Chowseletop awoke and started up. Hence the exclamation at the end of Molly's speech.

"What's the time, Molly," said the squire, yawning loudly.

Miss Coddle looked at her chronometer. "Goodness gracious!" she exclaimed. "Happy hours pass quickly," she said, with a loving look at his lordship. "We must descend immediately, or we shall miss the continent of Africa. Come along," and sprinkling a little liquid from her descending bottle upon the cloud, a misty vapor rose around her. She began slowly to descend. Simultaneously Chowseletop did the same.

Ammonite felt in his pockets for his bottle, but he could not find it. He shouted out to Molly, "My bottle is gone!" But both she and Chowseletop were some distance below by this time; and of course could not return to his assistance. He felt all over the new coat the squire had bought him. It had most curious pockets, well planned for dropping things out of them. The bottle was not there. He went down on his hands and knees and thoroughly searched the cloud; beating and banging it; smoothing it out and running his hands through every fold and cranny of it. But



no bottle could he find. Then he realized the horrifying fact that he could never descend again. He must spend the rest of his life up there in that awful silence; that never-ceasing sunlight, whilst the busy earth rolled round and round beneath him, making day and night, and night after day; but with him, it must always be Thursday, the fourth of April, as long as he lived.

But how long would he live? With consternation he remembered that the squire had taken the luncheon-basket with him. Then he threw himself upon his face and gave himself up for lost. He beat the cloud with his fists in an agony of despair. An idea struck him. He would look over the edge, and if not too far, try to drop into one of his friend's cloud chariots. To stand he was afraid, so he dragged himself along upon his stomach, until his head hung over the cloud's extremity. What a wonderful sight met his gaze! At any other time, he would have appreciated its awful grandeur. Now all he saw was the great globe of the Earth looking about the size of a balloon suspended at an altitude of one mile; and resembling the image of the moon viewed through a monster telescope. Its mountains and peaks making jagged edges; its land and water showing



merely as light or shade. Right beneath him, two little puffs of white marked the place where his friend, his lover, and the luncheon-basket lay.

Alone! A speck in space. 'Twas horrible to perish thus. And he carefully crept back lest he should tumble over and thus put an end to his torture and his suffering. Better the raging fires of central earth. There, at least, there was some company. Whilst here, with the blazing sun pouring down on him, he stood a very good chance of frizzling alone. The new umbrella Chowseletop had bought him, lay close at hand. Why, what a fool he was! He might as well be comfortable the little time he had to live, and not be scorched up by the sunshine. He laid hold of the umbrella; put it up, and out of its folds fell—the bottle.

Never was bottle more welcome to the drunkard than was this little vial to the fossil man. Doubtless it had dropped into the gingham as he held it between his knees, during that terrific shoot up from the earth. The pockets of his coat were made in the topsy-turvy Utopian method of upside-downness. Without a minute's thought he pulled out the cork and emptied the bottle's contents upon the cloud.



Now, if he had not been so rash and excited; had he taken a little time to think; he would have remembered that his instructions were to sprinkle a few drops of the mixture all over the surface of the cloud, every now and then; and thus to ensure a steady and gradual descent. Instead of this, he poured the whole lot into the middle, and left the sides quite dry. The result was that the centre began to sink much more rapidly than the sides; and soon he found himself, feet downwards, in a sort of funnel. For a considerable time he travelled thus, slipping lower into the bag of clouds each minute. At length the sides began to gain a little transparency; and he saw, to his unspeakable horror, that he was over a mighty ocean. He had only escaped death by starvation in the limitless heavens to meet it by drowning in the unfathomable sea.

Down he went, lower and lower, and now a new calamity overtook him; or rather, slipped away from him. The bottom of the cloud bag was tumbling out. It fell far beneath his feet. He spread his arms to support him on the sides of the funnel. They were soft and yielding; and with a yell, he shot beneath. Luckily he still gripped his umbrella with his left hand. It



opened and broke his fall; and thus he floated, more dead than alive, until his feet touched something hard. He opened his eyes and found himself on *terra firma*.



## CHAPTER XIII.

## AMONGST THE SUN-WORSHIPPERS.

IN the centre of the South Atlantic Ocean, about  $34^{\circ}$  south latitude, are a group of rugged rocks of volcanic formation known as the Tristan d'Acunha Isles. Many years ago, long before the universal earthquake ; probably about the year 1800 ; the crew of an American whaling boat were wrecked upon their barren shores. The group being out of the beaten track of the ships of that time ; and most difficult of approach, by reason of the squally seas which continually surround them, these castaways for years were undiscovered, and doubtless mourned as dead. But they found the interior of their insular prison fairly fruitful ; water abundant, and fish plentiful ; so that when at last an adventurous ship drew near, they were too comfortably settled to accept offers of a passage home, and subsequent lionizing. All they wanted were clothing and wives. For these they



were prepared to trade off fish, fruit, fowls, and fresh meat. So a bargain was struck; and a cargo of young women imported. From that time the little community flourished. Having no traffic with the outer world, they became a country, a nation, a race, a species all to themselves. No one wanted them. They wanted nobody. In the world's great upheaval, out of which grew Utopia and kindred communities, this little Eden was untouched. Making no attempt at civilization, the unsophisticated natives throughout generations and generations had retrogressed in the same ratio that the great world had advanced. So that now, unknown to a people who used no ships, the inhabitants of Tristan d'Acunha had descended to the level of primeval man. They knew of no land beyond their stormy sea. Their horizon was the limit of their world. They never dreamed that human creatures like themselves existed other-where. It was on the topmost peak of this *terra incognita* that Lord Ammonite so providentially landed.

For some time he lay thoroughly exhausted. The marvellous machines of Utopian science and civilization were trying to the powers of endurance of the nineteenth century nobleman; besides, some-



thing always seemed to go wrong with them—in his case. He wondered where he had got to now, and how he should get home again. How sick he was of Centri-mundane shafts, arrested laws of gravity and aerostats! How he longed for a steady, slow-going Parliamentary train; even if it did stop at all the stations and arrived a few hours after time! At length he stood erect and looked around. He was near the summit of a rugged mountain which overlooked a fertile and picturesque country without a trace of cultivation. He began to think of Robinson Crusoe, and other well-known gentlemen who had spent their lives on uninhabited islands, and wondered if he should have a cat and a goat and a parrot. No. He was dead off parrots since meeting the diabolical spirit of Chowseletop's child. He would have a "Man Thursday" he thought; to commemorate this day on which he had undergone so much. He had already got an umbrella; and, using it as a mountaineer's staff, he commenced to tramp towards the valley beneath. As he walked, a lark started from under his feet, and soared up to heaven, singing its own glad song, just as in the good old times, one thousand years ago. No trained song birds here. No over-done civilization. The bird's sweet



trilling made his soul rejoice. In a little while he struck a mountain path, and then his heart leapt up, for he saw; not a footprint like his compeer Robinson; but the track of wheels. The first he had seen for about ten hundred years. There might still be hopes of that parliamentary train. He trudged blithely and hopefully along. A cock crew, down below, in clarion tones. No new-fangled, hour-recording cock, this; but a real old-fashioned farmyard barn-door rooster. On he went, as happy as a king. Quite forgetful of his missing hand, of the critical position of Sally Stubbs, of Professor Coddle's love, of everything except that he seemed to be back in his own old world again. He found himself humming a lively air and beating time with his umbrella. What was it? Where had he heard it? At the Alhambra of course. "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay—Ta-ra-a——" He turned a corner and—"Yes—no—why, yes!" There was Leveret, the squire's gamekeeper; and Mrs. Leveret; and two or three little Leverets. He could recognize them a mile off. But good gracious! how they'd grown! Even the old people seemed taller by a foot or two. And the little ones had whiskers! So had the keeper's wife! And how came they to be dressed,



or rather undressed, like that? Was it a family bathing party? But see, a little further on are Mr. and Mrs. Jawkins from the lodge, and John the butler with his two clumsy sons; and all the squire's retainers he remembered to have seen that Christmas Eve at Chowseltop Hall, one thousand years ago.

But they were so strangely dressed, he hardly dared approach them. Their costumes appeared to be a cross between those of African Kaffirs and North American Red Indians. Simple, yet effective, it consisted merely of a fringy girdle around the loins, skins of animals slung across the shoulders, plenty of rough metal ornaments, moccasins and head-dresses of eagle's plumes. At first it occurred to Ammonite that they might have been at a fancy-dress ball; but even on such an occasion the costume would hardly have been respectable; especially for the females. It was even more decollété than the fashionable evening attire of ladies of the 19th century. Their greatly increased stature, tremendous muscular development, and the very hairy nature of their freely-exposed skins were a problem at which he could not even guess. But they were old friends, and he determined to greet them.



"Hello! Leveret. How are you?" he cried out at the top of his voice; and waved his umbrella cheerfully over his head.

The little crowd looked up; then in perfect classical old English they all cried out, "The Devil!"; and the women sank upon their faces, whilst the men produced great bows and arrows.

"Don't shoot!" shouted his lordship in alarm. "Don't you remember me? I'm Lord Ammonite. I know you, Leveret. And there is Jawkins, and Biggs, and old Whitehead." The men looked at one another; half in awe and half in anger. Meantime the fossil walked towards them and held out his left hand.

They held a short consultation, then putting away their weapons they drew near his lordship's extended palm, and spat upon it. The poor man was extremely indignant and disgusted. He did not learn till afterwards that this was their token of friendship and submission.

"The Bard! the Bard!" all cried; and Leveret sprang away down the mountain side, like a young antelope. Ammonite sat down upon a rock to think. It was evident he must have made some slight mistake. Surely Chowseltop's well-trained and respectful retainers would never have behaved



in that fashion, even supposing they were out for a holiday picnic. Suddenly the correct solution to the mystery struck him. He had come across another batch of individuals whose physical constituents were those of people he had known during his former life; but whose frames were tenanted by entirely different spirits; and, whereas the Utopians had stepped forward towards culture and refinement, these creatures seemed to have taken equally extensive strides in a contrary direction.

While he thus pondered, Mrs. Leveret and Mother Jawkins, with old Granny Whitehead, crept timidly towards him, and seemed to wish to salute him after the fashion of their lords and masters. So, to keep things pleasant, he was constrained once more to extend his only hand and undergo their abominable greetings.

By this time Leveret returned with a patriarchal individual, more hairy than the rest, with long white flowing locks and beard. Across his bent back was slung a roughly-made harp, or indeed it more closely resembled the lyre. To this venerable old man all bowed low, and showered a perfect volley of nauseating salutes upon his outstretched palms. Then he advanced to Ammonite, inviting



his greeting and submission. Out of sheer revenge his lordship gratified him with a hearty good-will. Ammonite often afterwards wondered how he brought himself to do this ; but the most refined of men may become degraded by associations ; and to tell the truth, he seemed at the time to take a sort of spiteful delight in the vulgar act.

"The Bard," also, seemed highly gratified ; and unslinging his lyre ; accompanying himself with rare skill the while ; he sang this extemporaneous lay :—

" Welcome to Tristan d'Acunha!  
Welcome to the Isles of dry land!  
To the spot upon the waters  
Where the rolling sea-hill stoppeth:  
To the place the Golden Ruler  
Keepeth in its rocky Fastness,  
For the foot of Man to rest on,  
For the hand of Man to foster;  
For the love of Man to gladden.  
Welcome to Tristan d'Acunha!

" Welcome to Tristan d'Acunha!  
Welcome to the water's centre!  
Where the Golden Ruler riseth  
In the morning at the limit  
Of the place where live the fishes;  
Stays the space of seven candles,



Kissing each side of our homeland;  
Then beneath the Eagle's Kopje  
Sinks into his bed of glory.  
Welcome to Tristan d'Acunha!

" Welcome to Tristan d'Acunha!  
Welcome to the blissful dry land!  
Come ye from the stormy foaming  
Of the place where live the fishes:  
Come ye from ayont the Kopje  
Where are bred the creeping shadows:  
Come ye from the blue whose pigmies  
Ape the absent resting Ruler:  
Ye are come and ye are welcome.  
Welcome to Tristan d'Acunha.

" Welcome to Tristan d'Acunha!  
Welcome to the Ruler's love-land!  
Though thy limbs be small and puny;  
Though thy hair be scrag and scanty;  
Though thy face be white and waxen  
As the pallid pale pretender,  
He who smiles from out the welkin  
When our royal Ruler resteth.  
Though thy dress be strange and eirie;  
Though thy skin be smooth and hairless;  
Though thou comest from the darkness;  
Though thou be the very Devil;  
We who have no need to fear thee;  
On the palm we do anoint thee.  
We the Ruler's servants bid thee  
Welcome to Tristan d'Acunha!"



Ammonite was much pleased with this song of welcome. All but the last verse. He didn't quite like that. He thought it unworthy of so exceedingly skilful a poet. And as it was chanted in a minor key, it seemed to detract from the effect of the grand old man's ecstatic outburst. The grandeur of his effort, however, was still further marred by the ancient minstrel turning round to the people and with extended arms crying, "Now then. All together, gentlemen and ladies, if you please." Then the whole crowd, with hands raised to heaven, fell upon their knees and shouted out this time-honored chorus:

"For he's a jolly good fellow,  
And so say all of us."

His lordship afterwards learned that the "Bards" had handed down from generation to generation several scraps of lyric poems supposed to be inspired, but whose true origin was shrouded in obscurity. They were held sacred by the people and only used at the instigation of the Bards or Druids on occasions of great solemnity. The "jolly good fellow" referred to in this Song of Praise was not Ammonite, as he vainly im-



agined ; but the Sun whom they worshipped under the title of "The Golden Ruler."

Ammonite was now conducted to the Bard's state chariot which stood behind a bank of aloes. It was a rough wagon drawn by bullocks ; and in this, side by side with the minstrel minister of Sol ; his lordship was trundled and shaken down towards the collection of huts where these strange people lived.

The Bard was a very voluble old gentleman, and on the journey down chattered freely, so that by the time they reached their destination Ammonite had learned much of the manners and customs of this primitive race. In return he informed his amiable companion that he was a great personage from a land which was far beyond "the limit of the place where live the fishes," meaning the horizon of the ocean. Indeed he said that he came from the same place as the Sun did in the morning, and had travelled by the self-same route ; namely the highway of "the welkin." Altogether it came to be believed both by the Bard and by the people who crowded round about that the stranger was no less a person than a great and particular friend of the Golden Ruler ; possibly sent down by him upon the strict Q.T. to ascertain how



things were going on, and report such of the people as did not say their prayers regularly each morn at daybreak. That he was no ordinary man like themselves they all agreed. In the first place, if a man, where did he come from? Did not the waters meet the skies on every hand, and was not theirs the only "dry land for the foot of man to rest on." Again, he had known them all by name. "Leveret," so called because of his speed; the man of ceaseless talk and chatter, "Jawkins;" the tallest man amongst them whom they had named "Biggs," and old "Whitehead" whose locks had been bleached and colorless since the memory of man. He had called them all by name. Truly he must be an emissary of the Golden Ruler. They were exceedingly rejoiced and sang snatches of their sacred psalm of jubilation, "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay," in which his lordship joined with great zest and energy.

It was a sight at once impressive and peculiar, as they halted in the square around which were planted numbers of rude huts. These semi-savages, the degenerate descendants of a shipwrecked crew, retaining only the rude instincts, a remnant of the language, a few snatches of ribald songs, and the art of chewing tobacco to identify them with



their ancestors: exulting in the marvel that had come to them in the shape of the only human creature they had ever seen or heard of outside the limits of their own small territory. That pigmy country which they vainly imagined was the only chosen of the Golden Ruler, who had made all things for them and them alone; much as the greater humanity which crawls this tiny planet, has flattered itself since the days of Adam.

Arrived at the centre of the square, the entire population, numbering seven hundred and seventy-seven, turned out and joined in the National Hymn of Thanksgiving. Each islander would have given Ammonite separate and special token of submission; but that his lordship waved them off with kingly dignity, and following the High Priest, or Bard, into a hut, told him the messenger of the Sun would talk with him alone. Also the same gentleman would have no objection to a little light refreshment; so willing hands were dispatched for food, and the newly-deified fossil prepared to catechise his Bardship.

"What number of you are there on this island?" began the messenger of Sol.

"That which our master did command. One hundred for each candle that he shines before rest-



ing; ten for each notch upon a candle; and a Bard for every wick. In all, seven hundred and seventy souls, whose lives grow shorter as the candle burns; and seven Bards who are the light."

"But how is it you do not increase and multiply? How do you make your candles burn steady?" asked his lordship, trying to adopt the native style of metaphorical language.

"Such lives as kindle before a life is dead are snuffed out ere they flicker," replied the Bard.

"You don't mean to say you kill your infants?" asked Ammonite aghast.

"As the Ruler extinguishes the stars," replied the grand old idiot.

"This must not be," said his lordship, with authority. "It is the Ruler's bidding that henceforth all children live, until your numbers reach seven hundred times the number of seven candles. Do you understand?"

"Certainly, O friend of Sol. I'll make a note of it," said the Bard, scratching a memorandum on his skin cloak with his lengthy fingernail. "Any further orders?"

"That will be all at present," said Lord Ammonite, feeling that he had done unborn humanity a good turn for once; which was rather strange,



for in the olden time the population question had been one of his particular fads. This reminded him of another antidote to overcrowding, and he asked: "Do you fight much?"

"Fight? what word is that?" asked the Bard with wonder.

"Do you go out armed to kill other men?"

"Wherefore should we kill men? They are not good to eat."

"Then why do you carry bows and arrows?" inquired his lordship.

"To hunt our food. At first the hunters would have killed you; but they saw you were not good to eat," replied the innocent old man.

"Quite right; I'm tough and sour, and most unpalatable," said the fossil eagerly. He thought it well to encourage that opinion amongst so strange a people. "Now tell me of your king," he continued.

"King?" questioned the simple islander.

"Your chief—your ruler," explained Lord Ammonite.

"We have but one. The Golden Ruler. All else are equal; save the Bards, who are the elders of the people."

"Who makes your laws?"



"I know not what you mean by 'laws,' great Messenger of Sol," replied the minstrel very humbly.

"How punish you those amongst you who do wrong?" continued the inquisitor.

"Punish! wrong! we know of no such words." Clearly the English vocabulary had been much diminished since the time of these people's sailor ancestry.

"And to whom do your lands, your fruits, your fishing rights, and your hunting grounds belong?" inquired his lordship.

"To all. The Ruler shines on all alike," was the reply.

"Who does your work?"

"Work? We know not 'work.' We hunt, or fish, or gather fruit when we are hungry. We draw water when we thirst. That is what we call pleasure," said the Bard.

"Surely," thought Lord Ammonite, "here are a happy people. No king; no wars; no laws or lawyers; no wrong-doing or punishment; and all work a pleasure. If this be degeneration, then hurl civilization to the dogs and let all the world degenerate. After all, unmoulded minds and simple hearts were much the happier."



At this moment the people brought their gifts of fruit and food; so the pair stepped out into the open and fell upon the dainty fare provided. The Bard holding each tasty morsel up to the sun, and repeating with the greatest solemnity the ancient formula: "I look towards you and I likewise bow," to which the crowd responded with grand choral effect: "Eat, drink and be merry. Amen."

The banquet was scarcely ended when the whole population, men, women and children, threw themselves upon their faces, crying aloud, "The Devil bird," and commenced rapidly to swear most violently and continuously all manner of ancient sailors' oaths; which had come down to them traditionally from their original fathers; and which they wrongfully mistook for the most pious form of prayer. Ammonite asked what possessed the people. But the Bard himself, pointing upward, merely said: "The Devil bird. It sometimes flies over, but never alights because we drive it away with our prayers;" and he started in himself, fairly out-swearing the others with his terrible profanity. He was a champion oath-slinger. Lord Ammonite looked upward and beheld—an aerostat.



This time no amount of swearing seemed to intimidate the huge "devil bird." The Bard grew black in the face with the vehemence of his "praying;" but still the great flying machine came nearer and nearer until it settled not a hundred yards from the terrified aborigines; and out of it stepped Professor Margaret Coddle.

"My lost love, at last I have found you," she cried to Ammonite, and would have rushed toward him; but that he, fearing the praying of the islanders was scarcely fit for female ears to hear; motioned her back, and stepping over the prostrate forms of the half-naked savages, he told her to shut her eyes, put her fingers in her ears and go for goodness' sake.

"And leave you with these horrible creatures; Never!" heroically replied the lady. At this point Ammonite observed several of the men feeling for their bows and arrows. Whether they thought Molly good to eat or not he couldn't say; but he considered it wise; on her account of course; to jump into the aerostat, telling her to follow; and to leave his newly-found friends without farewell. He did not leave, however, without something; for as they sailed away an arrow pierced him from beneath, and found its billet in the same



old place as did a pointed skate-iron, one thousand years ago.

As soon as they were well clear of Tristan d'Acunha, Molly told his lordship how she and Chowseletop had descended on Table Mountain; mad with apprehension as to Ammonite's fate. How from that eminence they had seen his cloud descend, shaped like a waterspout. How the squire had gone aloft again to wait until South America rolled round to him, while she had hired an aerostat from the town beneath the mountain, determined to examine the whole  $34^{\circ}$  track across the South Atlantic in search of him if he should providentially have escaped a watery grave, and how, by the aid of her powerful glasses, she had discovered him feasting with savages on an unknown island. The rest we know. We also know that after he had told her his adventure she gazed on him admiringly, and nearly upset the aerostat by suddenly catching him round the neck and kissing him. A liberty which the good old man bore very patiently, although it brought the blush of modesty to his chubby cheeks.

When they arrived at Buenos Ayres they found Chowseletop awaiting them in great anxiety. He was rejoiced to see Lord Ammonite again; and his



lordship greeted him most gladly. But somehow or other ; the fossil felt a secret pang of regret at being torn from the island of the simple savages. He was getting a thorough distaste for civilization in general, and Utopia in particular. The professor was most kind, attentive, and even loving ; still he felt that had she been simple and unsophisticated, like these islanders, instead of being so beastly scientific, or, had she even resembled the Molly Coddle of the unmoulded mind, whom he had known in former life, he could have felt much more warmly attached to her. When his thoughts drifted back to the old nineteenth century homely lady, that ministering angel of warmth and comfort, he sighed sadly and regretfully ; and asked himself, as the professor had asked him that day in the clouds, why on earth he hadn't married her. His infatuation for Charlie Chowseletop was completely dead from the time when, with prophetic slang, she had dubbed him "an old fossil." Thus he mused as he sat in the twilight within the palm-decorated patio of an hotel in the metropolitan town of South America, sucking his whisky lozenge ; and when at length they all retired to rest ; for this memorable Thursday came to an end at last ; his thoughts were of Molly,



not as she was now, the foremost scientific savant in Utopia; but as she was upon that Christmas Eve when she so fondly and so liberally plied him with whisky toddy and rum punch—in bulk.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE POLAR RAILWAY AND THE SUB-ATLANTIC TUBE.

WITH the waking on the morrow, thoughts of Stubbs and of his missing hand; subjects which the stirring events of yesterday had crowded out of his mind; now gave his lordship much uneasiness. Especially as he had to keep them to himself. He felt a certain amount of delicacy in consulting his friends about the Stubbs affair on account of the unamiable light thrown upon Captain Charlie's character; and concerning his hand he needs must be silent or betray himself of the not too creditable peccadillo into which his kind friend, "The Great Sammy," had led him. Still he felt anxious to get back to Chowsetop Villa without delay and ascertain how matters stood. So on meeting his friends in the breakfast saloon, he pleaded sickness, and suggested that, if it were all the same to them, he should like to go home by



the nearest and the quickest route: it always being understood that he barred Centri-mundane shafts and arrested gravitation. Molly explained, however, that since they had come so far, the course at first proposed would occupy as short a time as any. So without remaining in the handsome Western Capital of the Southern Cross States; they slipped over the river Plate by aericar, to Monte Video, which was the terminus of the Great Magnetic Attraction, Polar Power Railroad. Between here and Old York there was an hourly service of trains; that timed for ten o'clock being just about to start as they got into the station. So, losing no time, they jumped aboard and were soon upon their way.

A most delightful journey this. But for the elegant accommodation; the music of the wheels, which were made to play popular selections, in place of the noisy rattling and rumbling of the old times; and the pace they went (fully one thousand miles an hour), his lordship might have fancied himself in one of those parliamentary trains he so longed for yesterday. The motive power by which so great a speed was gained was a simple application of the North Pole's attraction of the needle. The cars were very light, the rails



so elegantly laid that they offered no resistance to the perfectly balanced and adjusted wheels, and a number of powerful magnets completed the job. The application of an efficient brake was all that was needed to stop at any station. The track of course lay through the heart of tropical Brazil, that land of most luxuriant flowers, and foliage, and fruit; of gaily painted butterflies, and birds, and beetles, at once the gala land of zoology, entomology, and botany. Here again the Retina Retaining Glasses were used, this time affording the old Englishman unqualified delight. He had been fond of horticulture in his early days, and if he had had his way he would have stopped the cars a dozen times in some of the most deadly swamps to have gained a specimen or two of a magnificent orchid of some as yet unknown variety. Here the old man actually made a suggestion to Professor Coddle that it would be well to improve upon her Retaining Glasses so that by the joint application of some permanent photographic apparatus the lasting images of these rareties might be given to the world. Clearly the fossilite mind was expanding in conformity with true Utopian science, and it made the lady love him all the more.

At Cape St. Roque the rails ran onto series of



mighty aqueducts, connecting a long succession of the West Indian Islands; and here the sensation was sublime. Built on floating pontoons close to the sea-level; for of course there was no ocean navigation now; the effect was that of skimming over the surface of the waters, and unattended with that unpleasant motion common to steamers and sailing vessels. Only one mishap occurred which greatly startled Lord Ammonite at first. A flying fish, rendered desperate by its anxiety to escape the jaws of a dolphin, darted in at the open window at which his lordship sat, and first slapping him in the face, then flopped about most unpleasantly on his lap, finally slipping down inside his pants, and was only shaken out at his ankles after making him uncomfortable for the rest of the day.

They were a jolly party in that car. One gentleman, particularly, a stockbroker hailing from the Great Western Republic, made himself most agreeable. He unceasingly explained and expatiated upon the sterling merits of newly floated companies, in which he himself had an interest, and in which he strongly advised Lord Ammonite to speculate. He even offered to procure shares for his lordship at par, and only charge the usual brokerage. He was a director of the New Atlantic



Drainage Company, which was formed for the purpose of drawing the waters of the Atlantic through various channels into vast copper reservoirs, and then boiling them down and extracting the salt in blocks. This and the revenue derived from the large quantity of boiled fish, which could be sold according to quality at much lower prices than those which now prevailed, he calculated would produce a dividend of fully fifteen per cent. on the subscribed capital. In addition to this, the bed of the ocean would be available for sale to the contiguous governments, and admirably adapted for emigrant farms and rabbit warrens. The treasure trove would be divided amongst the shareholders as bonus every third year. Contracts had been entered into with Father Neptune, old Boreas and others, copies of which could be seen at the company's office. Britannia, the former ruler of the waves had disappeared, and not having been heard of for some centuries, no opposition or litigation was to be looked for in that quarter. The stranger strongly advised Ammonite to go in for a good big parcel of this scrip; and his lordship promised to think it over.

Conversation turning on the overpowering heat prevalent on some of the West Indian Islands in



the summer season, the communicative gentleman had a scheme for cutting them off beneath the water level and floating them into the temperate zone during certain months; which he said would be sure to boom up big. He relied upon some of the wealthy Western Republicans buying the smaller isles right out and making floating family seats and estates of them. Locating them down south in the dry season, and going up north with the swallows. "A large number of these migratory birds, bred on the island, and chained thereto by the leg;" he said, "would instinctively work their home up to the proper latitude by small daily degrees; and pull it back again in winter; so that no tug-boats would be required." Ammonite wondered if this project and the Atlantic drainage notion would clash at all; but he was naturally a reserved man and didn't like to ask questions.

The company promoter also said he was forming a syndicate to purchase Great Britain, sink her, and grow native oysters on her; but when both Chowseletop and Ammonite informed him that they had landed property there, he became taciturn and would give no further information. "Doubtless, they would be approached in proper



form," he said; "but the syndicate did not intend to pay fancy figures for proprietary rights."

At length Old York was reached; and, although Ammonite would much have liked to have thoroughly done the truly wonderful city; yet his anxiety to get home was so great that they went at once to the departure platform of the Sub-Atlantic Pneumatic Tube Company; his lordship promising himself another visit to the Great Western Republic early next week.

There is so little interest in travelling through a great submarine tube, that it is not worth while to describe this portion of Friday's journey. Suffice it to say that it was sufficiently dark for the professor to exercise so much of her sophistry upon the susceptible Ammonite, that before Utopia was reached, that good old man had faltered out a timid "yes;" and it was understood that Molly Coddle would become Lady Ammonite as soon as possible after the next Fiancée Fair.

They arrived at Chowsetop Villa just before the usual dinner hour, and his lordship, full of pleasant emotions, hurried up to his room. There he found a neat little parcel with this inscription: "The Great Sammy Lectern. P. P. C." What



could P. P. C. mean? However, on opening it, he was overjoyed to find his missing hand. There were also three envelopes awaiting him. The first contained a summons to attend the Fiancée Fair to be held on Monday next. The second, a short note from the bank manager, telling him that a cheque of his for one thousand pounds had been presented and duly honored yesterday; but as this represented a trifle over his balance, an immediate remittance was respectfully requested. Then his lordship understood the mysterious P. P. C. on "The Great Sammy's" parcel. The unscrupulous actor had made use of his right hand to draw and sign a cheque; with the proceeds of which he had eloped; also taking with him, as it afterwards transpired, his lordship's most admired lady of the "retinue." The third cover contained a message from Nurse McFuss to the effect that there was no saving Sally Stubbs without an alibi; and adding "would Lord Ammonite please send the price (one thousand pounds) at once. Execution fixed for Monday."

Here was a pretty pickle for the poor old gentleman to be placed in. Robbed of his patrimony. Ruined, and by his own hand. Defrauded of the very sum that would save an innocent,



unoffending young man from suffering death for his, Lord Ammonite's, offence. And yet he dared not tell his lover and his friend of his predicament. How could he account for the loss of the money without exposing his own escapade and folly? And without them how could he obtain sufficient to save Sally Stubbs from the gallows? How lucky, thought he, that he did not stay in Tristan d'Acunha! But still what could he do, now that he had come home? Suddenly a happy thought struck him. The day before he went to Chowsetop Hall, to spend Christmas, ten hundred years ago, he had withdrawn one thousand pounds in gold from his London bankers. He had more than anticipated that the squire would want a loan, and proposed to pay this over to his old friend, in cash. He did not care to see the evidence of his weakness constantly occurring in his pass-book. What the good old man called his charity cheques always stood to "self." This money he had locked in his bag within his bedroom at the Hall. If it could only be unearthed at once! The ancient English coin was still of sterling value; and it would get him out of all his difficulties.

So, during dinner, he artfully contrived to turn



the conversation upon the subject of the ruined mansion whence he had been dug; and expressed a great desire to see it once again. He also threw out cunning hints as to the store of remarkable antiquities yet buried within its walls; stimulating the curiosity of both Edward Chowseletop, the ardent collector of odds and ends, and Professor Coddle, the scientific enthusiast. He ventured to suggest that, under his guidance, such discoveries might be made as the world of antiquarian experts little dreamed of. Not only was it possible that other fossil men were entombed within those ruins; but possibly fossil women. Here he nearly wrecked his plans entirely. This latter fact inclined Miss Coddle to look upon further excavation with disfavor. She said she'd have no nineteenth-century hussies brought to life. Old flames perhaps of his lordship. But that gentleman reminded her that she need not exercise her skill on the petrified ladies; to which she replied that she'd take very good care she didn't, unless it were to break them up with a hammer. For such an amiable old lady, it was really extraordinary how spiteful she got at the idea of Ammonite even mentioning a fossil woman. Clearly the "green-eyed monster" survived the universal



earthquake, and still went about seeking whom it might devour.

Eventually it was arranged that the little party should pop over early to-morrow morning, and do a bit of digging around just to give them an appetite for a late breakfast. To Ammonite's annoyance Captain Charlie Chowseletop dropped in just as this was settled, and without any ceremony invited herself to join the party.

That evening was spent in quiet domestic home enjoyment. The squire brought out some of his favorite phonographic musical numbers of choicest brands. He had some songs that had been many centuries in bottle. For Ammonite's special delectation he opened a magnum of "Patti;" and through the medium of the latest improved phonograph, they greedily drank in the divine vocalization of this superb songstress.

Miss Coddle was most kind and attentive to his fossilship, but of course discreetly created no suspicions as to the understanding between them. Such conduct would have been considered very bad form indeed in good Utopian society; until the lady's choice had been publicly made at the Fiancée Fair, but she pressed his foot now and then beneath the table.



Captain Charlie, too, was particularly gracious to Lord Ammonite; and treated him in quite a different manner than she had heretofore. "Really," thought his lordship, "sudden success spoils most people; but it seems to have quite improved this young lady. Who would have thought her capable of such behavior to poor Stubbs?" and he inwardly resolved upon taking the first opportunity to try and plead the unfortunate young man's cause with the dashing officer. Perhaps after all he might persuade her to do the right thing; and so save his thousand pounds. So he in turn threw off the cold disdain with which he had hitherto treated Charlie; and they were quite a jolly little party all the evening.



## CHAPTER XV.

"FROM STONE THOU CAMEST; TO STONE THOU  
SHALT RETURN."

THERE is nothing so refreshing and exhilarating as an early morning scamper across the country, when the lengthy shadows fall across the newly-awakened and invigorated earth; when the dewdrops still glisten in the flowers and grass; and the very air seems to get into our heads, our hearts and our feet, making each as light and joyous as itself. Surely the great and fascinating charms of fox-hunting lie chiefly in its early habits. Shooting, fishing, yachting, cycling; are not each of these at their very best in those glorious hours between the dawn and breakfast-time; when Nature has the whole world to herself, and the busy hands who rule her out of her domain are still sleeping in their drowsy beds? Let any one not accustomed to Utopian advancement and



advantages try to picture to themselves the inspiring effects of a flight through the ambrosial air just after daybreak ; while all the golden glory of the newly-risen Aphrodite still lingers in the eastern sky. Let them imagine the swift passage through the fragrant ozone, redolent with unpolluted perfume of wild woodbine, hawthorn blossom, and sweet violets which is wafted upwards to the heavens, fit breath for the Gods. Let them feel that glad immunity from all earthly care ; that delicious isolation for which the weary world-bound spirit has so longed. Let them know that these at last are theirs ; and they will understand the emotions inspired within Lord Ammonite's heart as he started on his journey upon the great celestial highway ; bound for the scenes of his former life, whose memories were daily growing more dear to the warm-hearted though crochety old man.

They went by aericar ; Chowsestop, Charlie and Lord Ammonite, who took good care to put his mischievous detached right hand carefully in his pocket this time. Miss Coddle, having flown over from her Teneriffe abode upon her own light aerostat, preferred continuing on that, to riding in the somewhat over-crowded public conveyance. This was Lord Ammonite's first trip across the



English Channel; for the occasion five days ago, on which he was borne fainting from the place where he was unfossilized, does not count; and he was astonished to see the changes that had been effected by time and triumphant science upon familiar places of his former years. The waters of the Channel were locked in at either end, and could be drawn off when required. The river Thames, which once was traversed by the mighty ships of all the world, was now merely kept for trout-breeding and fishing purposes. The site of once famous London town had been despoiled and laid bare; all its choicest ruins having been removed to enrich the capitals of Utopia and other nations. The wreck of the Tower was in the World's Museum. Portions of St. Paul's were distributed throughout all corners of the globe. Westminster Abbey had been looted, and the bones of its honored dead might now and then be picked up cheap in old curiosity shops. Chowseletop himself had come across a shin-bone from Poets' Corner for a mere song. Opinions differed as to whether it belonged to Milton or Lord Byron. In many respects, it did not resemble any of the authenticated specimens of the osseous formation of both these gentlemen's understandings; large



numbers of which were to be found in all public museums and many private galleries. The ruins of Buckingham Palace were deserted; no one lived there, as usual. The place where Hyde Park had been was only distinguishable by a row of broken chairs on which a few conservative old society women still sat. This was said to be a good place for digging up reputations. A great many good ones having been lost upon that spot in the time of pre-historic scandal-mongers. Lord Ammonite looked around for the Alhambra, but could find no trace of it. He should have liked to have asked concerning it, but as a prospective married man, he thought it better not to do so.

It was a shocking sight, however, as they proceeded further northward, to see that once fertile little island; the model farm of the world, lying desolate and deserted. Where were now the happy homesteads, where the brown, hardy, horny-handed Englishmen, with hearts as soft as babies', had lived their peaceful lives? Where women, more kindly and tender than all Utopia could boast; without the knowledge even of such a word as "science," but with wills to work right cheerfully, and souls to live unselfishly? Maids, wives,



and mothers after God's own heart: where were they?

Here, in the Midlands, where are now the busy, panting, roaring, never-tiring mills and factories, with their hoard of rough humanity to whom refinement and culture were as Greek and Latin. They didn't know anything about it, and they didn't want to. Rude, but honest, for the most part, were these people. When let alone, contented, but swayed by servile agitators who strove to mould their minds; 'twas then that their mistakes were made. Civilization drove contentment from their humble homes. Where were they now? Swept away by the great and universal earthquake. "Surely," thought Lord Ammonite, "'twas science and ultra-civilization alone which shook the earth to its foundations, and produced that mighty upheaval which destroyed so much peaceful, if unenlightened, happiness and bliss."

At length they dismounted, and strode towards the ruins of Chowseltop Hall, across the once elegantly kept park. As they walked, something swagged heavily in his lordship's pocket. It was his hand. It was pleasant to feel that he had it with him, as he gaily stepped along the well-known



path, pointing out to his friends the pond where he had had his ducking at the skating party. They laughed heartily as he told each the part they had taken in that ludicrous incident, which was the cause of his appearing before them in so strange a costume. Then they laughed again at Chowseltop, in his admiration for the antique, getting himself up in his fac-simile, and imagining it the usual nineteenth-century attire. The old man dwelt too on Molly's kindness and attention after his accident, which made the professor feel proud of herself and her ancestor. When he half hinted that it was in his endeavor to join Miss Charlie that the mishap occurred; that young lady's successor was most gracious, and said she thought her predecessor was a fool to have been so far away from such a nice old gentleman as he must have been. Had she been in her place, she should only have been too happy to have been ever by his side. At this Ammonite glanced at the captain, and met a tender look in her magnificent eyes. It made him feel uncomfortable; and yet he liked the sensation. She certainly was a very fine woman. Much handsomer than Professor Coddle. But he thought of Stubbs. Of Charlie's



leaving him to die. And his allegiance to Molly became staunch again. As he strode along rapidly—bent on unearthing his thousand pounds, and remembered how he, himself, in the old times had been willing to take Charlie from her Stubbs, even though the loss of her might perhaps have been as death to the young artist; his conscience smote him. So did his right hand. It banged away with the oscillating motion. It seemed to be getting more weighty. "I never knew I had such a heavy hand before," thought his lordship, as he moved it to the pocket on the other side, for a change.

Arrived at the site of the great dining-hall, Ammonite was moved by many strange emotions. It seemed to him that he had never until now realized the immense space of time which had elapsed since those old walls rung with mirth and merriment upon that happy Christmas Eve. And of all the joyous throng he alone remained to see this woful desolation. What a marvellous change. Huge blocks of fallen masonry; which shrubs and plants almost smothered, crowded the interior; and a massive oak, whose age must be centuries, sprung out of the centre. He almost despaired of being



successful in his mission. He pointed out the spot most likely to yield good results if they could only penetrate the soil to a sufficient distance. 'Twas within the refectory, over which his bed-chamber, the room of honor reserved for special guests, had been: so Chowseltop, with enthusiastic zeal, stripped off his coat, and got to work with a pick-axe and a spade, as if he meant real business. Charlie and Miss Coddle poked about beneath big stones; and Lord Ammonite stood looking on anxiously, hoping against hope that a certain little black bag might be providentially unearthed.

Charlie was the first to drop across a treasure. Merely a bit of torn and mouldy old canvas; but with some curious figure, which after a good deal of rubbing and cleaning showed the outline of a female form. "No less than a portrait of yourself as you were then, Miss Chowseltop," said Ammonite. Charlie was much amused, though not a little offended, to think that long-legged, awkward-looking thing in petticoats could by any chance suggest to his lordship's mind a likeness to her dashing self.

"Yet it was painted by a man called Stubbs," said Ammonite, meaningly.



Charlie seemed a little disconcerted; but with well-assumed gaiety she said, "Well, he deserves to be hung for painting a thing like that."

Just then Chowseletop called out that he had found something, and all ran eagerly to see what he had unearthed. It was only a piece of wood, firmly wedged into the ground; but beautifully turned and carved. His lordship instantly recognized the leg of the bedstead on which he had slept. Underneath that bed he knew he had left the bag. That bag which contained the ransom of a fellow-creature's life. He was tremendously excited, and, seizing a spade, started digging as best he could with his only available hand. They cleared a space in one direction, and came across another leg.

"That's the foot," said Ammonite. The others evidently thought they had found some strange colossal animal. He meant the foot of the bedstead. "We want to be at the head," he cried.

"Certainly, let us see the head, by all means," said Chowseletop. The perspiration was streaming from Ammonite's brow; so he threw off his coat, with his right hand in the pocket; it really seemed to be getting heavier still; and he commenced



digging, a little distance away, with renewed vigor. All were most excited and curious as to the supposed animal which lay buried there; but his lordship kept his own counsel.

For half an hour he dug, and then he sat down, quite exhausted; but he knew they must be near the place where lay the longed-for bag, and he begged of the others to continue their exertions. Presently he said he felt dazed and queer. Would one of them hand him his coat, he asked; he wanted his pocket-handkerchief. Miss Charlie tripped away and lifted the garment.

"Good gracious! what a weight! Whatever have you got in your pockets?" said that young lady, as she carried the coat with difficulty.

"Nothing but my handkerchief and my hand," said his lordship. "Dear me! What is the matter with me?" he added, as he strove to rise. "All my limbs feel stiff and numb."

Miss Coddle stopped her work and approached with anxious look.

The old man put his hand into the coat-pocket as Charlie held it up. Then an expression of intense horror crept across his countenance; his eyes fixed with a stony glare, and he seemed to lose the power of speech.



"What is the matter?" cried all the others in alarm.

The fossil pointed to the coat and said: "Feel! I dare not touch it. It is cold."

The professor darted her fingers into the yawning pocket, and produced—a hand of stone. Ammonite's right hand was nothing but hard, heavy, unfeeling stone again.

For a moment all stood aghast, and gazed in amazement on the uncanny thing. Then Molly startled and chilled them to their hearts as she shrieked: "Heaven forgive me! I'd forgotten. This is the sixth day. All clamored for further explanation; but the poor old woman was choked with her terrible emotion. At last, as she rocked herself to and fro in an agony of grief, she wailed out these awful words:

"I did not tell you. I meant to have done it in his sleep. The application of my elixir vitæ must be renewed every sixth day. That hand was vivified some hours before my lord. It is now dead—dead forever. Once the effects of my elixir lapse they can never be renewed. In but a little time he whom I brought to life: he, whom I grew to love so well: he will be cold and dead as that



hand. Through my forgetfulness. I, who would gladly give my life to save him; I shall be his murderess; for he will again become lifeless, cold, unfeeling stone. He will once more be a fossil man."

No words can describe the consternation caused by Professor Coddle's confession. Ammonite himself seemed already deprived of life. He was paralyzed with fear. It was all very well for him to have depreciated Utopian ways and institutions; to have been dissatisfied with the life he now lived; but to be called upon to leave it, and so suddenly, was quite a different matter.

He sprang to his feet with a terrible effort and looked around like a wild animal at bay, ready to fight for his life. But the only powers to fight were within himself. He could feel them slowly creeping through the blood in his veins. He thumped his chest, he beat his head and tore his hair. He would not die. It was a fearsome sight to see that old man's agony and frenzy of despair. He hobbled to Professor Coddle; already his limbs were stiff; and he clung to her garments. He upbraided, beseeched, implored, stormed and entreated, all in the same



breath. She was his only hope. She had rescued him so often. He would love her, worship her, adore her; if she would only save him from death. A death so cold; so horrible.

Whether Charlie was distressed by this scene, or whatever was her motive; certain it is that at this point she slipped away in the direction of the aerocar line. Her muttered "Now or never," however, would suggest that she had some great project, in her pretty head. No one noticed her disappearance. All interest was centred in the slowly petrifying man.

"Molly! Molly!" cried the wretched creature. "For the love of Heaven; for God's sake, don't sit there and sob whilst I am dying; literally by inches. Look! Look at my fingers. They grow hard and heavy. Feel! Feel!" and he absolutely thumped her with his left hand. "Do something to save me. Oh! woman! Is your heart also turned to stone?"

The professor jumped up. "Come with me," she said. "Quick! to my laboratory. There is some fluid left. I can save a portion of you, even if you lose a limb or two. Come!"



The prospect was not encouraging. Existence with a hand short had been troublesome enough; but life minus a few limbs; perhaps with only a trunk and head was not a bright lookout. Still the miserable creature tried his best to run towards the aerostat. The inborn dread of death makes life in any mutilated shape most precious.

"But how are you going?" cried Ned Chow-seltop. "That thing will not carry both."

"Alas! That is true;" said Molly, stopping suddenly. "Your weight is rapidly increasing. By the time we reach Teneriffe, you will be three parts stone, and weigh a ton at least. We should bear the machine to the ground, and only be worse off than ever. I must go alone, and bring the mixture back as quickly as possible."

"Oh! Fly! Fly!" said his unlucky lordship, sinking to the ground. It was superfluous telling Molly to fly. That was just what she was doing before the words were off his lips; and at such a pace that she would surely be charged with furious flying, by which the lives of Utopian subjects were endangered.

All thoughts of Stubbs, and of the money he had come to seek had left his lordship's mind forever



now. He could only sit and frantically watch the gradual development of the subtle forces which were slowly, very slowly; but very surely turning all his animal organism into stone. He could trace the gradual hardening of his flesh. He could feel his blood grow gritty as it coursed thickly through his veins. His lips became callous. His tongue and gums felt calcareous. He begged Chowseletop to give him water to drink. There was none nearer than the pond; but the good old squire hurried off without a word. Directly he was gone the unhappy old man would have called him back again; but he had not strength to shout.

He was now alone. To perish thus by slow degrees; perhaps the brain the last of all, the mind living to see and feel that body it controlled a ponderous mass of rock; 'twas horrible. But to be alone? Ha! Hideous thought! He strove, with superhuman effort, to rise and follow Ned. He could not move. His feet each weighed half a hundred-weight. Already they were stone. Then he knew that the metamorphosing process worked upwards. The brain would be the last to change. Oh, it was torture ten times worse than Tantalus ever bore!



What was that now whispered in his ear? "Lord Ammonite, I love you!" Strange words for a man in such a position to hear. He turned his head and beheld Miss Charlie Chowsestop. That glorious, glowing specimen of womanhood was leaning over him and speaking words of warm affection into an ear which would so soon be deaf; aye, deaf as stone, to sound of any kind!

"I have loved you, passionately, devotedly since those ancient times when first we met, one thousand years ago." Captain Charlie was an artful minx. She had guessed the old man's early admiration of her ancestor, and now sought to take advantage of it. The clever schemer had a momentary triumph. For one short minute Lord Ammonite forgot his critical position. Forgot that he was petrified close up to the knees. He only felt the warm lips of the girl he had so much admired in days of yore, and a flash of ecstasy was his. But it was brief as lightning.

"Be my husband, dearest," said the wily officer. "Marry me at once. See, I've brought the registrar who has the power to make us one."

His lordship saw an acetic old lady standing, book in hand, in the background.

"To make *us* one!" he moaned, as the memory



of his awful state returned. "I wish she could make *me* one, instead of but three-quarters of a man, as I am now," he muttered to himself. Then he said aloud, "But why this hurry?"

"Love brooks no delay," she murmured; and, seeing Chowseltop returning, for once this astute young lady gave herself away. "Come, hurry up," she added, "before you turn to stone, Lord Ammonite."

"Lord Ammonite!" The mention of his name awoke him to a proper understanding of her sudden love for him. She wanted his title, not him; and he recoiled from her embrace with a shudder of disgust.

"I am the promised husband of Professor Coddle," he said with dignity; "and since your registrar is here, I shall marry her who gave me life, if she returns whilst I am still alive."

"Never!" vehemently cried Captain Chowseltop. "She gave you life. She is practically your mother. You cannot marry your mother."

"I never thought of that," replied his lordship meekly. Poor silly man! His brain was not softening. It was hardening; which is worse.

Charlie saw his weakness and thought to intimidate him into submission; so she said fiercely



between her teeth: "Lord Ammonite, I love you, and I'll have you. If not, I'll have your heart's blood."

"That you cannot," replied the victim, with something as near a smile as the chalky nature of his changing cheeks would allow. "My heart will soon be stone, and you can't get blood from a stone," he said.

Just then Chowsetop drew near with the water, and Charlie had barely time to hiss into the distracted old man's ear, "You marry me, or I swear you shall not live. Remember, you old fossil;" when the squire put the cooling liquid to Ammonite's lips, and he felt momentarily refreshed again. But the drinking-cup fell upon his knee, and smashed into a hundred pieces. It had struck upon solid stone.

Professor Coddle, who had made the quickest time on record to Teneriffe and back, now hove in sight. So short had been her absence, that Ammonite and Chowsetop both feared she had come back empty-handed; but as she alighted a little way off, and ran towards them, holding aloft a tiny bottle, a cry of joy and exultation arose from each. Something very like swearing escaped from the captain's lips.



"I've got the elixir. How much of him is there left?" cried Molly.

"All above the knees, except the tips of the fingers and the nose," replied Ned Chowseletop.

"Thank heaven! There is still enough to make a loving husband," she exclaimed; and stepped behind Ammonite's back to apply the elixir. But Captain Charlie intercepted her.

"Hold!" said she. "He marries me or none other. That man's title has been the dream of my life; for the last two days. I will never give it up."

"Lord Ammonite," said Molly severely. "You must choose between us. Marry her, and go to the unfeeling stone whence I revived you. Marry me, and I will restore you; that is, all that is left of you. Speak, which is it to be?"

"You! You! You!" cried Ammonite, in an agony of suspense. "Be quick! My thighs and my left hand are gone. For goodness' sake be quick!"

With a smile of triumph Molly hastened to obey; but swift as thought, Charlie stepped forward, and dashed the precious bottle from her hand. It fell to earth, and its life-giving fluid, to the last drop, dribbled away amongst the grass.



"Lost! Lost!" cried Miss Coddle, and she fell prostrate over her doomed and dying love.

Captain Chowsestop sneeringly turned upon her heel and walked away.

Now that all hope was gone, the nobler nature in the old Englishman began to assert itself. He soothed Miss Coddle with kindly, loving words. Told her not to fret for him; but to remember that in course of time, perhaps after a thousand years or so; they both might live again; and, under more propitious circumstances, she might be his wife. He felt 'twas useless now to trouble the registrar, as all that remained of him in flesh and blood was that above the chest. Even now, as Molly clung around his neck, she felt the warmth fade out of that, and it grew stiff; as if he had been sitting in a draught. His mind now seemed to be slightly affected. His lips were fixed, and a stony stare was in his eyes. His speech became thick, and they could scarcely catch his mumbled words.

"An old fossil," he said. "She called me an old fossil! How cold it is! I'll go to rest! The earth is upheaving! The walls are shaking;



falling; crumbling away. I see stars. The roof has fallen in. I am cold, lifeless, dead and turned to stone. I am an old fossil. Yes! I am A Fossil Man!"



## CHAPTER XVI.

"AND LIVE HAPPY EVER AFTERWARDS."

CHRISTMAS morning at Chowsetop Hall. How bright and happy; how warm and comfortable the dear old homestead looks. Rich green holly, abounding with bright ruby berries, bristles in every available nook and corner from wainscot to ceiling; seeming to prove by its brave presence of crisp leaves and ripe fruit that productive nature still lives in spite of the killing cold of mid-winter. It appears to teach that, though life slumbers in the leafless trees, and resting buds lie hidden beneath the snow, their germs are everlasting; and will spring again; aye, even from the cold stony-like stillness of death which now holds them for a season.

A large bunch of mistletoe hangs dangerously above the dining-hall door; placed there by the artful and designing Molly Coddle, with the full connivance and approval of sweet Miss Charlie



Chowseltop: and all about the pleasant old place seems to speak of peace on earth and good will towards men. The latter more especially on the part of the women; who also entertain a pretty warm assurance that the male creatures will take the seasonable hint and "do to others as they would be done by" according to the precept of the great and universal Golden Rule.

Miss Molly has been up since no one knows what time; superintending the clearing away of the débris, and tidying off all trace of last night's festivities. Getting all into spick-and-span order before the others make their appearance for breakfast.

It is a refreshing sight to see the dear energetic old lady in a spotless big white apron, a little mob cap to keep the dust out of her bonny braided hair, and a feather-brush in her hand, bustling about in a flurry of excitement lest one tiny speck of dirt should escape her vigilance and enjoy peaceful repose in some sly corner. And Miss Charlie is there too in an apron—very wee and lace-bordered, and with old white kid gloves on her sweet little hands, leaning languidly on a broom, and her poor pretty eyes looking tired and sleepy. She has got up, like the kindly, considerate girl that

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she is, to help dear Miss Molly to remove the appearance of chaos always left after a country house Christmas Eve party. Oh! the piles of broken "pulling crackers" strewn on the floor, and the verses they contain! So far Charlie has been principally employed in reading them and chaffingly applying their inane contents to Miss Molly. That good soul is not in the least offended; indeed she feels secretly gratified when Charlie reads an elegant production and vows it was intended to be spoken by Lord Ammonite to Miss Margaret Coddle. The choice effusion runs thus—

"If I were stone you'd give me life,  
If I were ice you'd thaw me;  
I only want you for my wife  
Forever to adore me."

Presently all was as prim and orderly as even Miss Molly could wish; then glancing at the clock, the ladies found it was within half an hour of breakfast time, and hurried off to complete their toilets. They were in great alarm lest they should be caught thus; "not looking their best"; although, if they only knew it, they really couldn't well look better than they did at that moment.

As Miss Coddle passed Lord Ammonite's door



she saw that once more he had not taken his cup of tea in; so, fearful lest he should put his foot in it again, she gave a timid tap at the door and shouted: "Here is your tea turned to ice, your hot roll like a stone, and breakfast will be ready in a minute or two." Then she tripped away.

Lord Ammonite heard her; recognized her voice; but he didn't quite know what to say. He didn't quite know where he was. He didn't know anything quite. And he felt — oh! so queer. He muttered incoherently. "All right, professor. I know I am. Cold as ice—and turned to stone. But—where am I? Why, Miss Coddle, Miss Molly—you have brought me to life again. Molly!—why! what is this?" He sat up on the floor, where he had lain all night, and looked at his right hand. It hung limp and lifeless. "She's forgotten the hand. She's given me life, and attached a living man to a dead hand;" he said. But he had only been lying on it, and as he looked at his temporarily paralyzed limb, the blood rushed tingling through the veins, and he suffered from violent "pins and needles."

Then he cried: "No! No! It has never been dead. We have both been asleep; but I've awakened first."



Then he looked around and laughed out loud; saying: "This is Chowseftop Hall. Yes; there is my bedstead. Underneath is the bag with the money. Thank heaven! It has all been a dream. I am not an old fossil. I'm a man, as I used to be one thousand years ago. I'm a man!" he cried joyously. "The same man. No—not the same—" he continued with serious tones. "Not the same; but very different. Quite changed. No longer a scientific dreaming fool, yearning for the days of futurity; but a wiser being, devoted henceforth to filling the present with happiness; striving to be thankful for and contented with that which now is."

"And I've lain there all night! Dear me! Dear me! How shocking!" he continued, addressing his image in the mirror. "Ammonite, you old fool, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. Oh! that rum-punch and whisky! Let me think. Oh! my head! Yes, I danced in those rugs. What must they all have thought of me? And Miss Charlie. I shall never dare to look in her face again;" he said ruefully, as hazy thoughts of his comical love-scene on the corridor drifted slowly into his mind. "Oh, Miss Coddle! Miss Molly! Why did you ply me so freely with hot toddy?"



"What a dear, good, kind creature she is!" he reflected, as he carefully dressed himself. "What an excellent wife she would make! It was she awakened me just now. It was she called me away from that confounded chimerical Utopia. 'Twas she brought me back to this sweet, peaceful nowadays world. Not with magic elixir; but with gentle words distilled from a kind, tender heart. By Jove! If she'll have me—I'll—I'll let *her* mould *my* mind; for it needs it most; until my crochety, cynical, silly old brain becomes as guileless, as unscientific and as contented as her own."

Lord Ammonite was a changed man from that moment. When he made his appearance in the dining-hall; where before he had been so loud and so arrogant; forcing his theories down every one's throat; domineering and sneering; with his bitter contempt for all things of to-day and his everlasting cry of the good times to come, one thousand years hence; he was now quite subdued and reserved. But his greeting of all his old friends was none the less hearty. Except perhaps in the case of Miss Charlie. That young lady thought, which was quite true, that he felt ashamed of his yesternight's folly; and she tried hard to put him at his



ease. Still, another thought was in his mind. He remembered how the Captain Charlie of his dream would have wedded him for his title; and also how the squire had told him this girl was quite willing. He determined to question Ned Chowsetop on the subject at the very first opportunity.

My word! What a hearty grip of welcome he gave to young Stubbs! Every one was quite astonished. Last night he had not shown much liking for the artist. To-day he was quite effusive. Said he was delighted to see him alive; and other strange things; for the late fossil could not help at times making many little slips. His dream had been so remarkably vivid.

At last breakfast was over. Breakfast "in bulk," mind you. Very much in bulk; after the hospitable habit of Chowsetop Hall; and his lordship found an opportunity to corner the squire.

"Ned," he said, "you're quite sure there was no mistake about that little commission of mine? The lady was agreeable?"

"Certainly," said Chowsetop. "Why, Molly seemed delighted. You know she always was sweet upon you, you sly dog. Haven't you asked her yet?"

"No," stammered Ammonite. He saw it all



now. Of course Ned would never have thought him such a vain old fool as to wish for his daughter. Ned had asked Molly Coddle by mistake. "No," he repeated. "But I will, Ned, this very day."

Of course the ladies were going to morning service at the parish church of Yapham-cum-Meltonby. Equally of course Stubbs would escort them; and who else do you think? Why, Ammonite, the scientist and scoffer. It was a lovely morning. They would walk. And they did; two and two. Stubbs and Charlie a long way in front. Ammonite and Molly a long way behind.

How that calm Christmas morning contrasted with the harum-scarum life that his lordship had lived in his dream! The lull in the bright bracing air; broken only by the regular clang of the one tiny church bell; at whose summons all within hearing peacefully and piously wended their way to their simple yet sincere worship. Not on aerocars, sky-cycles, or aerostats; but on foot; books in hand, and with God in their hearts. Was not their happiness purer than that of Utopian civilization? Was not Alexander Pope right when he wrote those lines—



"In spite of pride, in erring reason's spite  
One truth is clear : whatever is, is right."

The Reverend Samuel Lectern preached a Christmas-day sermon ; which, if not particularly brilliant, was most severely orthodox ; and Lord Ammonite felt quite angry with himself because all through the discourse he could not help thinking of the "The Great Sammy," that thousand-pound cheque, and the prettiest girl in the "retinue." He could not shut his mind to the events of his dream ; and when he saw Leveret's wife, and old Mother Jawkins in their best Sunday gowns, he almost laughed as he thought of the funny figures they cut in their barbaric costumes on the South Atlantic Island. When he held out his hand to the gamekeeper in an affable, Christmas-comes-but-once-a-year, sort of way ; he would not have been a bit surprised or offended if that highly honored gentleman had expectorated upon it.

The walk back from church. What happened then ? We will not pry too closely. We only know that four intensely happy people ; not altogether ; be it understood ; but in separate couples ; all arrived very late for luncheon. The Reverend Samuel had already been there and



waiting fully half an hour. There were blushing explanations, and hearty congratulations all round; for Ammonite pulled the timid Stubbs through. He wasn't going to see Captain Charlie; as he kept calling Miss Chowseletop; let the poor young man die, as he assuredly would unless she married him. Ammonite was determined, so Chowseletop consented. Mr. Smart got permission to make public by means of the *Flypaper*, two matrimonial engagements; and McFuss, in his rude soldierly manner much shocked the ladies, Miss Coddle, in particular; by promising to stand godfather; not nurse, as his lordship suggested; to the first baby of either couple.

That evening the mortgages on the family estate were put into Chowseletop's hand, whilst that one thousand pounds found its way from a little black bag into Charlie's possession; for her to keep, in case her future spouse should ever want an "alibi," as the donor expressed it. Stubbs never did want an alibi. He made one of the best and most faithful of husbands.

Molly became Lady Ammonite; and in course of time, manufactured a baby—making no mistake this time; as did the Utopian Professor. It was a son and heir; invested, not with parrot life, but



with her own kind, hearty, generous spirit. Lord Ammonite became a conservative and a practical philanthropist. He has never forgotten the lesson he learnt during that “Mid-winter Night’s Dream ;” when he was A Fossil Man.



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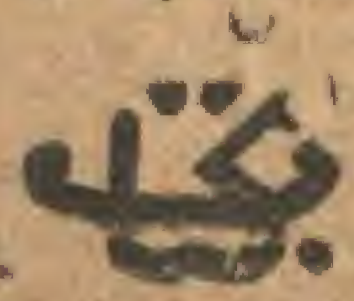
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